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STATE OF NEW MEXICO

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT DIVISION
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 (505) 984-0020

Russell F. Rhoades, MPH, Director

May 6, 1983

Scott Nicholson
 Environmental Protection
 Agency
 1201 Elm Street
 Dallas, TX 75270

Dear Scott:

It has recently come to our attention that the Plateau Refinery in Bloomfield, New Mexico may be conducting some activities that are in violation of the RCRA Regulations. The New Mexico Hazardous Waste staff has been in contact with our sister state agency in Utah and they've informed us that Plateau in New Mexico has shipped off a load of 1800 barrels of API Separator Sludge to Utah. (See attached memos for senario.)

Oscar Simpson of OCD (Oil Conservation Division) for New Mexico has told us that a large amount of that waste was buried at the Plateau facility. As you know, Plateau has been attempting to get delisted and has only applied for generator status. They do not have interim status for a land farm or landfill facility. Additionally, Mr. Simpson has sampled the groundwater near the San Juan River, several hundred yards from the facility and found lead levels of 18 ppm. He says that there is a large plume of contaminates (organic and metals) under the facility that can be witnessed as seeps from the side of the bluff upon which the facility sits above the river. (See the pictures I left with Sheryl Fought for a vivid depiction of this.)

EID is greatly concerned that the contaminates from the Plateau Refinery have entered the upper aquifer under the facility and are probably entering the San Juan River. The town of Farmington as well as others draw their drinking water from this river.

Our comments concerning Plateau's delisting petition reflect EID's concern over their sampling and disposal techniques. We request that EPA investigate this situation. We feel it is necessary that an in-depth inspection and sampling visit take place as soon as possible.

Scott Nicholson
May 6, 1983
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If I can provide any additional information on this matter, do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jack Ellvinger". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Jack Ellvinger,
Environmental Scientist
Hazardous Waste Section

JE:lr

cc: Oscar Simpson, OCD
Plateau file