



Those issues include volatile organic compounds and petroleum products such as diesel fuel, gasoline, jet fuel and kerosene, which all were spilled into the ground below.

The company installed a barrier between the refinery facility and the river to keep contaminants from entering the San Juan, said Wayne Price, Environment Bureau chief for the Oil and Conservation Division of the State Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department.

"They have a number of projects ongoing to abate and remediate the groundwater contamination," Price said. "The contamination is now contained."

According to the Environment Department, most of the contaminants detected beneath the facility are in the northeast portion of the refinery.

Rankin said that under the plan, the company will be placed under a specific timeline to correct the contamination and clarify how the company will monitor the air, soil and groundwater.

"The order says, You, Giant, need to develop plans to determine the extent and nature of the plume and propose a way to clean it up," Rankin said, adding that it will ultimately be state officials that must approve of the company's corrective plan.

The Environment Department also will have the power to fine the company for failure to comply with the final order, as State Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources did about two years ago, Price said.

Giant received a fine up to \$100,000, Price said. However, the oil company paid \$30,000 and invested up to \$2 million in upgrades to prevent the contamination from spreading.

A bentonite slurry was installed around the entire refinery to contain the release of any hazardous chemicals.

"When it contacts water, this stuff hardens up and becomes impermeable. It's a common technique used to prevent unwanted seep through," Price said.

Subsequent samples of the San Juan River in the last two years have come back negative for any forms of contamination, Price said. Monthly testing by the Oil and Conservation Division likely will be scaled back.

"One of the main goals of this order, besides cleanup, is to determine where the leaks and spills are coming from at the refinery site," Rankin said. "If you don't know where they are coming from, you aren't really solving the problem."

Giant employs about 200 people, including subcontractors.

The draft order can be found at the Environment Department's Hazardous Waste Bureau web site at [www.nmenv.state.nm.us/HWB](http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/HWB). Public comments must be received by 5 p.m. Aug. 21.

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