Los Alamos
NATIONAL LABORATORY
EST.1943

Environmental Programs
P.O. Box 1663, MS M991
Los Alamos, New Mexico 87545
(505) 606-2337/FAX (505) 665-1812

RECEIVED
FEB 15 2008

National Nuclear Security Administration
Los Alamos Site Office, MS A316
Environmental Restoration Program
Los Alamos, New Mexico 87544
(505) 667-4255/FAX (505) 606-2132

Date: February 15, 2008
Refer To: EP2008-0093

James P. Bearzi, Bureau Chief
Hazardous Waste Bureau
New Mexico Environment Department
2905 Rodeo Park Drive East, Building 1
Santa Fe, NM 87505-6303

Subject: Request for Extension for the Completion of the Removal of the Mortandad Permeable Reactive Barrier

Dear Mr. Bearzi:

Los Alamos National Laboratory (the Laboratory) is requesting an extension for the completion of the removal of the Mortandad permeable reactive barrier (PRB). In preparation for mobilization, Laboratory Water Stewardship Program has become increasingly concerned over the degradation of the road access to the PRB as a result of the heavy and frequent snows this year. There is serious concern over the ability to conduct safe operations given the road condition, particularly related to the transportation of the approximately 20-ton (20-yd^3) rolloff bins containing excavated waste. Because the size of the staging area at the PRB is limited, the PRB-derived waste containers have to be transported to a storage area on the adjacent mesa top. The road conditions into and within Mortandad are problematic for heavy vehicle use. As these snows begin to melt, the project would encounter deep mud that could worsen the already difficult road conditions. An incident has already occurred when a jack-knifed trailer blocked the road on the hill out of the canyon for 3 days.

The Laboratory would like to postpone the work until the middle of May 2008. In addition to the concerns and delays caused by road conditions, high-noise operations in portions of Mortandad Canyon, including at the PRB site, are restricted because of a threatened-and-endangered species (spotted owl) exclusion period that generally lasts until early May of each year. Following the spotted owl exclusion period and after the road is dry, the Laboratory plans to conduct substantial road upgrades in Mortandad Canyon to facilitate safe operations for heavy vehicle traffic. The new schedule will allow us to complete the removal of the Mortandad PRB in a safe and controlled manner and will be completed by the beginning of the monsoon season in early July 2008.

If you have any questions, please contact Danny Katzman at (505) 667-6333 (katzman@lanl.gov) or Mat Johansen at (505) 665-5046 (mjohansen@doeal.gov).

Sincerely,

for

Susan G. Stiger, Associate Director
Environmental Programs
Los Alamos National Laboratory

Sincerely,

David R. Gregory, Project Director
Environmental Operations
Los Alamos Site Office

SS/DG/PH/DK:acm

Cy: Neil Weber, San Ildefonso Pueblo
Mat Johansen, DOE-LASO, MS A316
Bonita Eichorst, DOE-LASO (date-stamped letter emailed)
Laurie King, EPA Region 6, Dallas, TX
Steve Yanicak, NMED-OB, White Rock, NM
Tom Skibitski, NMED-OB, Santa Fe, NM
Peggy Reneau, WES-DO, MS M992
Danny Katzman, EP-LWSP, MS M992
Susan G. Stiger, ADEP, MS M991
Carolyn A. Mangeng, ADEP, MS M991
Alison M. Dorries, WES-DO, MS M992
Paul Huber, EP-LWSP, MS M992
Tina Behr-Andres, EP-LWSP, MS M992
Mark Van Eeckhout, EP-LWSP
EP-LWSP File, MS M992
RPF, MS M707 (with two CDs)
Public Reading Room, MS M992
IRM-RMMSO, MS A150