



*Environmental Protection Division  
Water Quality & RCRA Group (ENV-RCRA)*  
P.O. Box 1663, M704  
Los Alamos, New Mexico 87545  
(505) 667-0666/FAX (505) 667-5224

*National Nuclear Security Administration  
Los Alamos Site Office, A316*  
3747 West Jemez Road  
Los Alamos, New Mexico 87545  
(505) 667-5794/FAX (505) 667-5948

Date: November 7, 2011  
Refer To: ENV-RCRA-11-0246  
LAUR: 11-11884

Ms. Diane Smith  
USEPA Region 6  
1445 Ross Avenue, Suite 1200  
Mail Code: 6WQ  
Dallas, TX 75202-2733

Dear Ms. Smith:

**SUBJECT: LOS ALAMOS NATIONAL LABORATORY, REQUEST WITHDRAWAL OF  
DRAFT NPDES PERMIT NO. NM0031054**

On September 3, 2009 the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) and Los Alamos National Security, LLC. (LANS) submitted a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit application for the discharges from activated carbon units used to treat groundwater at Martin Spring, SWSC Spring, and Burning Ground Spring within the boundary of Los Alamos National Laboratory. On August 27, 2011 the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued public notice for draft NPDES Permit No. NM0031054, covering these discharges. Comments were originally due to EPA by September 26, 2011. On September 22, 2011, NNSA/LANS requested a 45-day extension to the comment period. On September 22, 2011 EPA granted an extension of the comment period to November 10, 2011.

Upon further consideration of the terms of the draft permit, NNSA/LANS have decided to withdraw the permit application. The Permittees request that EPA terminate the permitting process for draft NPDES Permit No. NM0031054.

NNSA/LANS applied for a permit for proposed discharges from treatment units that were installed at three springs under the Consent Order to remove Royal Demolition Explosive (RDX). Investigations performed under the Consent Order identified RDX as the contaminant of concern associated with historic waste management practices that is present in spring discharges. Granular activated carbon (GAC) was selected as the appropriate treatment technology because it successfully removes RDX. The draft NPDES permit, however, contains numeric discharge limits for other constituents that were not

identified as constituents of concern in spring discharges and were not considered during the treatment technology selection process. Specifically, the draft NPDES permit contains numeric discharge limits for bis(2-chloroethyl)ether, cadmium, copper, 3,3-dichlorobenzidene, hexachlorobenzene, lead, silver, and thallium. Although the GAC units will likely remove the other organic chemicals to below discharge limits, this assumption has not been confirmed. The GAC units will not, however, remove metals, which are present as naturally-occurring constituents in the water discharged from the springs. Past sampling of the springs has shown some of these metals to occasionally be present above the draft permit discharge limits. In addition, the presumed recharge area for the springs was severely burned during the recent Las Conchas wildfire. NNSA/LANS are assessing the impacts of the fire on the quality of the water discharged from the springs, including potential for increases in background concentrations of metals. Operation of the treatment units under the conditions of the draft NPDES permit presents an unacceptable likelihood of noncompliance. Therefore, the Permittees are withdrawing their permit application.

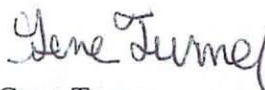
Please contact Mike Saladen (505) 665-6085 or Marc Bailey at (505) 665-8135 of the Laboratory's Water Quality and RCRA Group (ENV-RCRA) if you have questions or need additional information. Your assistance in this matter is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,



Anthony Grieggs  
Group Leader  
ENV-RCRA Group  
Los Alamos National Laboratory

Sincerely,



Gene Turner  
Environmental Permitting Manager  
Environmental Projects Office  
Los Alamos Site Office  
National Nuclear Security Administration

ARG:GET:MS/lm

Cy: Hannah Branning, USEPA/Region 6, Dallas, TX  
Larry Giglio, USEPA/Region 6, Dallas, TX  
James Bearzi, NMED/SWQB, Santa Fe, NM  
Gene Turner, LASO-EPO, A316  
Lance Woodworth, LASO-EPO, A316  
Cheryl Rodriguez, LASO-EPO, A316  
Lisa Cummings, LASO-SOC, A316  
Carl A. Beard, PADOPS, A102  
Michael T. Brandt, ADESH&Q, K491  
Dennis Hjereson, ENV-DO, K404, (E-File)  
David McInroy, CAP, M992  
Victoria George, REG-DO, M991  
Mike Saladen, ENV-RCRA, K490, (E-File)

Cy (continued):

Tina Sandoval, ENV-RCRA, M704, (E-File)

Marc Bailey, ENV-RCRA, K490, (E-File)

John McCann, PMFS-DO, M992

Cindy Blackwell, LC-LESH, A187

ENV-RCRA File, M704

IRM-RMMSO, A150