



Pueblo de San Ildefonso  
*Office of the Governor*

SI-GC15-162

October 19, 2015

Honorable Susana Martinez  
Office of the Governor  
490 Old Santa Fe Trail Rm 400  
Santa Fe, NM 87501

RE: NMED APPROVAL WITH MODIFICATIONS INTERIM MEASURES WORK PLAN  
FOR CHROMIUM PLUME CONTROL LOS ALAMOS NATIONAL LABORATORY  
EPA ID#NM0890010515 HWB-LANL-15-23

Dear Governor Martinez:

The Pueblo de San Ildefonso (Pueblo) received a copy of the State of New Mexico's approval for "interim measures work plan for chromium plume control" dated October 15, 2015. As you are aware, the Pueblo is directly impacted by any policies, measures, activities, or actions regarding the chromium plume located within the boundaries of the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), Los Alamos, New Mexico. For that reason, the Pueblo appreciates the State of New Mexico's directive to the Department of Energy (DOE) and LANL to initiate extraction wells so as to reduce any and all chromium migration in and around the regional aquifer. However, the Pueblo categorically disagrees with the New Mexico Environmental Department's (NMED) approval to allow DOE and LANL to commence drilling and construction of up to three (3) injection wells in the fall of 2015.

As stated by NMED, the DOE's and LANL's "primary objective, is to rapidly reduce off-site migration of hexavalent chromium (hereafter, Cr) in the regional aquifer by achieving hydraulic control of the leading edge of the Cr Plume along the southern boundary with Pueblo de San Ildefonso." Therefore, any type of approval remediation of the Cr Plume measures that could directly affect or impact the Pueblo warrants at a minimum, that the Pueblo be notified and provided the opportunity to comment on the details of such a decision based on the proximity of the Pueblo to the Cr Plume, and more importantly, because of our long standing government-to-government relationship with the State of New Mexico.

Up until this recent letter, the Pueblo has been deeply involved with the DOE, LANL, and NMED on all Cr activities, including any actions, measures and directives involving or impact of the Cr Plume. In fact, the following highlights the Pueblo's involvement with Cr Plume:

1. In December 2014, the Pueblo and the DOE entered into an agreement to install a regional aquifer "monitoring" well, called SIMR-2. This well would be down gradient of the Cr Plume, which is centered beneath Mortandad Canyon, a mere 300 feet from the Pueblo's boundary. The purpose of SIMR-2 is for Cr detection and long-term monitoring and any future remediation efforts of the Cr Plume.
2. In June 2015, construction of SIMR-2 began along with a collaborative and complex relationship with NMED and DOE/LANL on the construction of SIMR-2.
3. In July 2015, NMED as a courtesy provided the Pueblo a copy of a document entitled Interim Measures Work Plan for Chromium Plume Control (Plan). However, the Pueblo was never officially notified by the DOE of any type of work plan with its intentions to utilize injection wells as a remediation mechanism to reduce off-site migration, nor provided the opportunity to comment on the work plan.
4. On September 11, 2015, the pumping test for SIMR-2 was completed. On that date, the Pueblo, NMED, and DOE/LANL gathered samples for an initial test of whether the Cr had entered the Pueblo boundaries. To date, there has been no official determination of whether Cr has been detected.
5. On September 23, 2015, the DOE released for public comment the draft environmental assessment (EA) for Chromium Plume Control Interim Measure and Plume Center Characterization, which is based on preliminary information gathered on DOE/LANL property. The Pueblo has significant concerns regarding the adequacy of the Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act evaluation presented in the EA, and believes that DOE's finding that the proposed interim measure will not adversely affect Pueblo cultural resources is premature and inaccurate.

Again, as stated earlier, the Pueblo supports NMED in its efforts to allow DOE and LANL to initiate extraction wells so as to reduce the Cr migration, however, the Pueblo disagrees with the injection of any substance into the ground that could separate or expedite the Cr migration into Pueblo land and Pueblo ground water, based on the following reasons:

1. To date, Cr has not been detected on Pueblo land, however, as noted by NMED, the "recently installed regional aquifer piezometer CrPZ-1, located approximately 1,600 ft. of CrEX-1, produced a Cr concentration of 450 µg/L, significantly higher than expected, which suggests that the overall flux of Cr migrating offsite could be more extensive than previously thought." The Pueblo is very concerned that DOE/LANL does not know the extent and location of the Cr Plume.
2. The Pueblo is currently in the process of reviewing and evaluating the draft EA for Chromium Plume Control Interim Measure and Plume Center Characterization, and the Pueblo is adamantly opposed to any treated water from the extraction wells, which was previously contaminated with Cr, being injected back into the ground to replenish the ground water.
3. The Pueblo shares the same concern with NMED that "the proximity of the Cr Plume to Los Alamos County production well PM-4, with the possibility of the well becoming vulnerable to contamination" is foreseeable. As you are aware, the Pueblo's land is directly between PM-4 and the Cr Plume.
4. The Pueblo believes there are numerous data gaps on the southern plume boundary (i.e. conductivity and concentration) that may call into question the effectiveness of the hydraulic barrier approach. The Pueblo contends that any additional "unknown" impact like the injection of treated or untreated elements into the regional aquifer could expedite

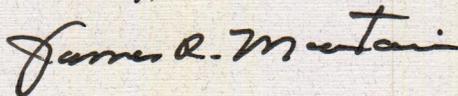
or isolate the Cr Plume. The Pueblo strongly recommends that DOE/LANL and NMED evaluate other types of options for reduction of the Cr Plume at the southern boundary to prevent further migration into Pueblo land. It is the Pueblo's opinion that any activity seeking to reduce the migration of Cr can either move or add to the problem already caused by the Cr Plume.

5. Lastly, the Pueblo anticipates serious and adverse impacts from the Cr Plume, whether directly or indirectly to all of its tribal cultural resources and practices located within the entire area of Pueblo land, known as "Sacred Area". Impacts to cultural resources and traditional practices have already been experienced by the Pueblo from the presence of the Cr Plume and the construction and monitoring activities undertaken to date. The Pueblo expects these adverse impacts to continue and worsen as the monitoring and remediation activities in the area increase and as the Cr Plume migrates.

Therefore, we ask that the State of New Mexico withdraw any type of approval for any type of injection wells that would be utilized for the reduction of the migration of the Cr Plume until the DOE/LANL can affirmatively locate the Cr Plume and demonstrate that the proposed hydraulic barrier approach will not adversely impact Pueblo lands. Until this can be done, we request that all contaminated Cr water extracted from DOE/LANL wells be mitigated through other means identified in the EA.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I may be reached at (505) 455-4101.

Sincerely,



James R. Mountain  
GOVERNOR  
Pueblo de San Ildefonso

cc: Secretary Ryan Flynn, NMED  
Mr. Michael Dale, NMED  
Mr. Pat Longmire, NMED