

SUSANA MARTINEZ, GOVERNORDavid Martin, *Cabinet Secretary*Butch Tongate, *Deputy Secretary***NEWS RELEASE****April 5, 2012**

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**Environment Department Issues Solid Waste  
Facility Permit for City of Socorro Landfill**

(Santa Fe, NM) –The New Mexico Environment Department announces it has issued a solid waste facility permit with conditions for the City of Socorro Landfill. The permit was recently issued by the Department under the authority of the New Mexico Solid Waste Act and Solid Waste Regulations. The permit has a term of 20 years. The decision comes after a public hearing held in Socorro back in February.

The City of Socorro Landfill is located approximately 3.5 miles south of downtown Socorro on Highway 1. The permit requires the construction and operation of lined landfill cells at the 116-acre facility to ensure protection of ground water. In addition, the permit requires the City of Socorro to close the existing unlined landfill concurrent with the opening of the new landfill. The City is authorized to dispose of municipal solid waste, certain special wastes (sludge, offal, and industrial waste), and construction and demolition debris at the permitted landfill. The permit requires that the City undertake operations for the permit term as specified in the approved permit application and Affirmative Action Plan and all other required operating plans to ensure that best landfill operating practices be followed. Upon closure of a landfill cell, an engineered soil cap must be placed over the waste that limits infiltration of water and is capable of sustaining growth of native plants. Ground water quality monitoring and landfill gas monitoring must be performed during the active life of the landfill and for a 30-year period following closure of the facility.

The City of Socorro initially filed a permit application for the landfill in 2001 and subsequently submitted an amended and updated permit application in 2006. Following a public hearing in 2008, the Department Secretary denied the permit application. The Secretary's denial was based in part on the City's objection to most of the Department's proposed permit conditions, in particular, the Department's proposal for a 10-year conditional permit and the requirement to operate in accordance with an Affirmative Action Plan to ensure that past violations of regulatory requirements would not be repeated. During the February 2012 hearing, the Department noted the substantial improvement in landfill operations over the past several years and therefore supported issuance of a 20-year permit with conditions.

For more information, call NMED Public Information Officer Jim Winchester at (505) 231-8800 or NMED Solid Waste Bureau Chief Auralie Ashley-Marx at (505) 827-0197.

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