

**SUSANA MARTINEZ, GOVERNOR**Ryan Flynn, *Cabinet Secretary*Butch Tongate, *Deputy Secretary***NEWS RELEASE****May 19, 2014**

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Environment Department Issues Administrative Order to DOE / LANS*Order Calls For Precautions On Handling and Storage of Nitrate Salt-bearing Waste Containers*

Santa Fe – This afternoon, the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) issued the attached Administrative Order (AO) to the Department of Energy (DOE) / Los Alamos National Security (LANS) calling for increased precautions for handling and storage of nitrate salt-bearing waste containers. The Order is based on the most recent evidence submitted to NMED as part of the ongoing DOE investigation into the cause of the February 14, 2014 radiological release.

In issuing the order, NMED Secretary Ryan Flynn released the following statement:

Based on the May 15th visual inspection, the Department of Energy (DOE) has indicated that the radiological release in the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) underground did, in fact, originate from one of two transuranic (TRU) mixed waste containers packaged at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL). The containers in question contain nitrate salts, which DOE postulated may have been the source of the release. As soon as DOE suspected that a container with nitrate salt mixed with organic kitty litter may have been the source of the release, the Environment Department required DOE to take immediate action to isolate and secure all nitrate salt bearing waste containers at WIPP, LANL and WCS. Following the receipt of the most recent evidence from DOE, NMED issued this order to ensure implementation and documentation of all protective measures being taken to secure nitrate salt-bearing waste containers at LANL.

NMED continues to require DOE to take every step necessary to protect the public, workers and the environment from the threat of any potential future releases. NMED is awaiting more specific and reliable information before commenting on how the latest DOE actions will impact the 3706 TRU Waste Campaign to remove all above-ground waste from LANL by June 30th, 2014. NMED's top priority is to protect the public, workers and the environment from the threat of any potential radioactive releases and we will not approve any actions, including the transportation of any waste containing nitrate salts or the re-opening of the WIPP, until we believe it is safe to do so.

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