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Immediate Release

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Environment Department Releases Human Health Risk Study for Corrales Airshed

(Santa Fe, NM) — The New Mexico Environment Department's (NMED) Air Quality Bureau today released the toxicological risk characterization prepared as part of the Corrales Air Quality Study by Gradient Corporation. Gradient is an environmental consulting firm based in Cambridge, Massachusetts with nationally recognized expertise in risk assessment and toxicology.

This report, titled "Human Health Risk Characterization, Corrales Environmental Health Air Quality Evaluation," is the final piece in the 15-month scientific investigation of the Corrales airshed by NMED. All data collected as a part of this study, including air canister samples, Open Path Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy (OP-FTIR) continuous air monitoring, and air dispersion modeling results, were made available for this risk assessment.

Gradient's report states: "this risk assessment did not find evidence that any of the measured or modeled chemicals are associated with increased acute or chronic health risks...it still remains possible that the health complaints of Corrales citizens are related to local pollutant emission sources. However, this assessment did not find sufficiently elevated concentrations of a particular compound such that adverse health effects would be expected." In this study Gradient used U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) risk assessment guidelines, which specify health-protective assumptions about exposure and toxicity.

"I would like to thank Gradient, and all our scientific contractors, for their high-quality work on this study," said Mary Uhl, head of the Air Quality Bureau's Planning and Policy Section and NMED's lead on the Corrales Study. "We have worked hard over the last 15 months to collect and analyze the best, most scientifically accurate, information available about Corrales' air. I hope that the product of this work is a testament to that effort."

Mara Seeley, Ph.D., a board certified toxicologist with Gradient Corporation, will present the report's findings and take questions at the next Corrales Air Quality Task Force Meeting scheduled for Thursday, April 1 from 5:30 to 8:15 pm at the Historic Old Church, 973 Old Church Road in Corrales, New Mexico. The public is invited to attend.

The Corrales Task Force will now take this human health risk characterization, combine it with all data collected by air canister samples, OP-FTIR continuous air monitoring, and the air dispersion modeling

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analysis in order to create the Corrales Air Quality Final Report. Using this report as their basis, task force members will also submit recommendations for future actions on the Corrales air issue. Written statements by members of the public will also be included. The deadlines for these submissions and schedule for future meetings are as follows: *(All dates and times are subject to change)*

- 4/6/04 Deadline for written statements for final report

- 4/6/04 Public meeting for Task Force and NMED to hear public comment.
Place: Rio Rancho City Hall
Time: 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

- 4/13/04 Task Force meeting to develop Task Force recommendations.
Place: Rio Rancho City Hall
Time: 5:30 to 8:00 p.m.

- 4/15/04 Public Meeting to allow comment on Task Force recommendation.
Place: Rio Rancho City Hall
Time: 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

- 4/30/04 Draft Final Report issued.

- 5/18/04 Final Task Force meeting and public comment.
Place: Old Church
Time: 5:30 to 8:00 p.m.

NMED will carefully review all recommendations and statements included in the final report. Given the potential amount of information in this report, it will take some time before NMED will be prepared to issue a response to this report. NMED will identify its target response date at the final meeting on May 18. NMED will also hold a public meeting after its response is issued to give the public an opportunity to comment on this response.

The full Human Health Risk Characterization and the Corrales Toxic Air Pollutant Emission Inventory Report as well as meeting minutes and other task force documents are available on the Internet at: <http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/aqb/projects/Corrales/index.html>

The Corrales Air Quality Study is administered by NMED and funded by grants from EPA. It was initiated in December 2002 to respond to citizen concerns about health impacts in Corrales' air, especially those arising from emissions from an Intel microchip manufacturing plant located in nearby Rio Rancho. The key project objectives have been to: (1) identify potential hot spots and specific air toxics of concern in the area, (2) develop an emissions inventory for the area, (3) perform a modeling analysis, (4) perform a monitoring study to estimate exposure levels, and (5) characterize toxicological risk considering the monitoring and modeling results and dose-response assessment.

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