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Environment Department Secretary Ron Curry Issues Statement on High Chromium Levels Detected in Los Alamos Regional Aquifer

(Santa Fe, NM) — New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) Secretary Ron Curry said the discovery of chromium contamination in the Los Alamos regional aquifer that exceeds both state and federal standards by several factors is a powerful reminder of the importance of environmental cleanup of legacy waste under the new laboratory contract.

“This discovery should serve as a vivid reminder to the new contractor and new director of Los Alamos that not only are worker safety and lab security issues important, but the 60-year environmental legacy of waste and contamination are equally important,” Curry said.

At Secretary Curry’s urging, U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) officials included environmental stewardship and plans for addressing the lab’s legacy waste as part of the LANL contractor selection.

“Now that the University of California and Bechtel have been awarded the contract, I expect to see some serious attention given to determining the source and extent of this chromium contamination and to developing a remedy that protects the state’s groundwater and public health,” Curry said. “The Environment Department will see that during this next contract period, implementing the state’s Order on Consent for cleanup and waste investigation at LANL will be a significant part of the work that goes on at the laboratory.”

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