



**BILL RICHARDSON**  
GOVERNOR

*State of New Mexico*  
**ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT**  
*Office of the Secretary*  
*Harold Runnels Building*  
*1190 St. Francis Drive, P.O. Box 26110*  
*Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502-6110*  
*Telephone (505) 827-2855*  
*Fax (505) 827-2836*



**RON CURRY**  
SECRETARY

**DERRITH WATCHMAN-MOORE**  
DEPUTY SECRETARY

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Contact: Jon Goldstein, NMED Communications Dir.  
Phone: (505) 827-0314

## **Environment Department Collects \$282,033 to Resolve Numerous LANL Environmental Violations Found During Surprise Inspection**

(Santa Fe, NM) — The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) has entered into a final order with the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) to resolve numerous violations under the New Mexico Hazardous Waste Act. LANL has agreed to pay a civil penalty of \$282,033 to resolve these 32 violations, 12 of which they have admitted to. These funds will go the State of New Mexico Hazardous Waste Emergency Fund where they will be available for environmental clean ups.

“This Department believes in strong enforcement of our state’s hazardous waste laws,” said NMED Secretary Ron Curry. “These laws were put in place by the state legislature to protect workers and citizens. I hope that this substantial penalty sends a clear message to LANL that the Department expects full compliance with those laws and will take vigorous action to enforce them whenever necessary.”

Violations found include, failure to maintain decontamination equipment, fire equipment and communications equipment in a hazardous waste storage area; failure to perform required inspections of hazardous waste storage areas; storage of hazardous waste without a permit; failure to make a determination as to whether material is hazardous waste; failure to properly label hazardous waste; and failure to maintain adequate operating records for hazardous waste storage areas. These violations were uncovered during an unannounced inspection of LANL by NMED Hazardous Waste Bureau staff in 1998. LANL was determined to be a significant non-complier based upon the violations documented during this inspection.

The final order is between NMED, the United States Department of Energy (DOE) and the University of California, who operates the lab under contract with DOE.

This civil penalty of \$282,033 must be paid to NMED within 30 days of the issuance of the settlement agreement. If LANL fails to do this, it will be charged interest at the rate established by state law.

For further information contact Jon Goldstein, Communications Director, NMED at (505) 827-0314.

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