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August 11, 2004
Immediate Release

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Environment Department Accepting Public Comment on Remedy for the Sandia Mixed Waste Landfill; Public Hearing to be Held

(Santa Fe, NM) — The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) today opened public comment on a proposal to modify the Hazardous Waste Facility Permit for Sandia National Laboratories (SNL) concerning the Mixed Waste Landfill (MWL). This permit modification would incorporate into the SNL Permit requirements for corrective measures for the MWL, also identified as Solid Waste Management Unit 76.

“I hope that today’s action will kick off an open and robust public discussion of the future of this site,” said NMED Secretary Ron Curry. “No final decisions have been made yet and we will review all comments that we receive for possible inclusion in the final permit.”

The MWL is 2.6 acres in size and is located at Technical Area (TA) 3, approximately five miles southeast of the Albuquerque International Sunport, within the boundaries of Kirtland Air Force Base (KAFB), south of Albuquerque.

The MWL was opened as the “TA-3 low-level radioactive waste dump” in March 1959 and operated until December 1988. As a result of these past activities, hazardous, radioactive, mixed (those wastes containing both hazardous and radioactive components), and solid wastes were disposed at the landfill. Records indicate that approximately 100,000 cubic feet of low-level radioactive waste containing 6,300 curies (Ci) of activity at the time of disposal were disposed of at the MWL.

In 2001 NMED directed Sandia to conduct a Corrective Measures Study (CMS) for the MWL because of concerns raised by the public. A CMS was conducted by Sandia to propose corrective measures or remedies for the MWL. NMED deemed the CMS complete on January 5, 2004. Sandia subsequently requested a modification to their Permit recommending a corrective measure for the MWL. NMED will reach a final decision on this corrective measure through the permit modification process, the public notice comment period and hearing proceedings.

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Public comment will be received by NMED through **December 2, 2004**. The Public Notice, Fact Sheet, and the draft permit are available on the NMED web site at: <http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/hwb/snlperm.html> under Mixed Waste Landfill.

NMED will conduct a public hearing on the draft permit beginning **Thursday, December 2, 2004, 9:00 a.m.**, at the Radisson Hotel & Conference Center Albuquerque, 2500 Carlisle Boulevard NE, Albuquerque.

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

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