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Environment Department Reaches \$346,452 Settlement with Navajo Refining Co. over Hazardous Waste Violations

(Santa Fe, NM) – The New Mexico Environment Department reached a settlement with Navajo Refining Co., LLC. with a penalty of \$346,452 over hazardous waste violations at the petroleum refinery in Artesia.

The company in years past violated state regulations by failing to store hazardous waste in a structurally sound container and improperly managing waste in other containers.

“We fought to include a provision in the settlement that allows citizens to hold the company accountable to the terms of this agreement,” said New Mexico Environment Department Secretary Ron Curry. “Navajo's willingness to come to a resolution is commendable.”

Navajo's other violations include failing to post warning signs on a fence around the North Colony Landfarm, neglecting to train employees in the proper management of hazardous waste, building a tank on the landfarm causing a disturbance to the area, failure to install a final cover on the landfarm and other violations. The landfarm, which is an approximately 4.25-acre land treatment unit, received hazardous wastes between 1980 and 1990.

The settlement requires the company to install a vegetative cover over the landfarm to absorb water and prevent it from seeping into the former landfill. The agreement also prevents the company from storing hazardous waste in certain tanks.

The Navajo facility, which has a capacity of approximately 100,000 barrels of crude oil a day, refines sour crude oil into gasoline, diesel fuel, and jet fuel. The refinery's storage tanks have a capacity of about 2 million barrels. Navajo's operations generate a variety of hazardous wastes, including ignitable wastes, various toxic metal-bearing wastes, slop oil emulsion solids, heat exchanger bundle cleaning sludge, spent hydrotreating catalyst, universal waste lamps and other waste. Navajo is not permitted to treat, store (for more than 90 days), or dispose of any hazardous wastes at the site. However, the company stores hazardous waste at several locations at its property for less than 90 days.

For more information, call Marissa Stone Bardino at (505) 827-0314.

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