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Environment Department Settles Numerous Violations at Sandia National Laboratories with \$619,980 Settlement

(Santa Fe, NM) — The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) and Sandia National Laboratories have resolved numerous violations of state hazardous waste management regulations and Sandia's hazardous waste permit discovered during a series of inspections at the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) facility in February 2003. The civil penalty for these violations totals \$619,980.

“The Department is establishing firm regulatory authority over DOE facilities in New Mexico, which is important for ensuring the health and safety of New Mexico's citizens and protection of the environment,” NMED Secretary Ron Curry said. “These enforcement actions demonstrate that the Department's inspections of federal facilities provide an important safeguard for our communities. We believe that, as a result of NMED's continued efforts, management of hazardous waste by federal facilities in the state will improve.”

The violations include failure to perform proper hazardous waste determinations, failing to store incompatible hazardous wastes separately, improper storage of hazardous waste, failing to perform weekly inspections of hazardous waste storage facilities, and failing to properly characterize leachate from the facility's Corrective Action Management Unit, among others.

DOE and Sandia paid civil penalties for 23 hazardous waste violations. The Department dismissed four violations originally alleged as a result of evidence Sandia produced during settlement negotiations.

All penalties will go to the State of New Mexico Hazardous Waste Emergency Fund where they will be available for environmental clean ups.

For more information, contact Adam Rankin, NMED Communications Director, at (505) 827-0314.

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