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Environment Department Settles Hazardous Waste Act Violations with City of Santa Fe

(Santa Fe, NM) — The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) and the City of Santa Fe have resolved through a settlement agreement and a stipulated final order alleged violations of the Hazardous Waste Act and the Solid Waste Act.

The city has agreed to pay a \$40,000 civil penalty to resolve liabilities for violations set forth in an October 4, 2005, Compliance Order alleging city staff illegally disposed of about 100 to 200 containers of chemicals, some of which were hazardous wastes, that had been stored at the city's wastewater treatment plant laboratory. The wastes were collected with other trash and placed over time in the Caja del Rio Landfill, which is not authorized to accept such waste. The Compliance Order originally assessed the city a \$70,000 civil penalty.

"This is about ensuring worker and public safety and enforcing state environmental regulations," NMED Secretary Ron Curry said. "Landfill and hazardous waste regulations are designed to protect water quality, so when they go unheeded we need to take action that sends the message we are serious about environmental protection."

To ensure future compliance, the settlement agreement and stipulated final order requires that the city either treat or dispose of all waste chemicals listed as hazardous waste by ensuring delivery to an off-site treatment, storage, or disposal facility that is properly authorized to handle such wastes.

The city is also required to complete within 30 days and submit to NMED an up-to-date inventory of chemicals stored at the plant. Further, the city has 60 days to submit to NMED for approval proposed written procedures for identifying and managing hazardous wastes generated at the wastewater plant to ensure compliance with the Hazardous Waste Management Regulations and to develop a training program for appropriate city staff that is to be completed within one year of the Department's approval.

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

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