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**Environment Department Cleans Up 68 Boxes of Hazardous Chemicals Left on Sidewalk
at UNM in Albuquerque**

Items Found Are Listed on Homeland Security's List of Chemicals of Interest

(Santa Fe, NM) – The New Mexico Environment Department began cleaning up chemicals and unknown substances left on a public sidewalk outside UNM's Chemical Research and Laboratory Supplier facility last weekend.

UNM staff found 68 containers of chemicals, including nine listed on the Department of Homeland Security's list of Chemicals of Interest. Those included peroxide-forming chemicals in various states of stability, an explosive, highly reactive metals and toxics.

"It concerns me that someone could be so irresponsible as to leave in a public area harmful chemicals that could injure people who may come into contact with those items," said New Mexico Environment Department Secretary Ron Curry. "We are fortunate that trained UNM staff responded quickly and responsibly to keep people and the environment safe."

UNM staff, who discovered the chemicals on Monday morning, moved the boxes inside the facility because of concerns that the items posed a health threat to those on campus.

NMED hired its contractor, Eberline Services, and subcontractor, Advanced Environmental Services of New Mexico, to work with UNM to arrange for the safe handling and disposal of the chemicals. The department will oversee that process. NMED will use the Hazardous Waste Emergency Fund to remove and dispose of the waste.

Abandoning those chemicals constitutes illegal dumping and carries a penalty of up to \$10,000 a day under the state's Illegal Dumping and Hazardous Waste Acts. An investigation and search for those responsible is ongoing.

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

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