



Bill Richardson
Governor

**NEW MEXICO
ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT**

Office of the Secretary

Harold Runnels Building
1190 Saint Francis Drive (87505)
PO Box 26110, Santa Fe, NM 87502
Phone (505) 827-2855 Fax (505) 827-2836
www.nmenv.state.nm.us



Ron Curry
Secretary
Jon Goldstein
Deputy Secretary

December 15, 2009
For Immediate Release

Contact: Marissa Stone Bardino, NMED Communications Director
(505) 827-0314 or (505) 231-0475

**Environment Department Issues Notice of Violation and Penalty to Los Alamos County
for Allowing Discharge of PCBs into Canyon from County's Annex**

(Santa Fe, N.M.) The New Mexico Environment Department issued a notice of violation with a proposed penalty of \$13,200 to Los Alamos County for violating state surface water standards in 2007 by discharging contaminated storm water from the county's municipal annex into a tributary that leads into Los Alamos Canyon.

The county allowed discharges from its municipal operations annex of storm water containing polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) at levels that exceed the numeric water quality criteria for wildlife habitat and human health. PCBs are classified as cancer-causing and persistent toxic pollutants.

"Water quality standards are in place to protect human health, provide for the propagation of fish, shellfish and wildlife and to provide for recreational uses of the water," said New Mexico Environment Department Water and Waste Management Division Director Marcy Leavitt. "The notice contains steps the county must take to protect surface waters and comply with state laws."

Los Alamos County Municipal Annex, which is at 901 Trinity Drive, includes administrative offices, fleet maintenance operations, storage, and other municipal operations.

The county violated state water quality standards on Aug. 3 and Sept. 5, 2007, by allowing the discharge of PCBs into surface waters in excess of state water quality standards. The standards establish human health criterion for PCB of 0.00064 micrograms per liter to protect the designated uses of unclassified ephemeral waters and Los Alamos Canyon. The department's Surface Water Quality Bureau collected a set of discharge samples from the county's annex yard Aug. 3, 2007 that showed a geometric mean of 0.16316 micrograms per liter and another set of samples on Sept. 5, 2007 that revealed a geometric mean of 0.00360 micrograms per liter.

Those samples were approximately 255 times and six times respectively the state's PCB human health criterion. In addition, the August 3 samples were approximately 12 times the PCB wildlife habitat criterion.

The department, which issued the notice Monday, has offered to meet with the county to discuss the notice of violation and penalty.

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

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