



NEW MEXICO
ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT



Office of the Secretary

BILL RICHARDSON
Governor
DIANE DENISH
Lieutenant Governor

Harold Runnels Building
1190 Saint Francis Drive (87505)
PO Box 5469, Santa Fe, NM 87502-5469
Phone (505) 827-2855 Fax (505) 827-2836
www.nmenv.state.nm.us

RON CURRY
Secretary
SARAH COTTRELL
Deputy Secretary

September 30, 2010
For Immediate Release

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

Rocky Mountain Low-level Radioactive Waste Board Approves Import of Uranium Hexafluoride to Proposed International Isotopes Facility near Hobbs

(Santa Fe, N.M.) The Rocky Mountain Low-level Radioactive Waste Board passed a declaratory order allowing the proposed International Isotopes Inc. near Hobbs to import uranium-hexafluoride tails for deconversion at its proposed facility near Hobbs.

The INIS facility, a proposed uranium deconversion and fluorine extraction processing facility, would deconvert depleted uranium from facilities like Louisiana Energy Services' uranium enrichment plant in Eunice, N.M. The order states that depleted uranium hexafluoride (DUF6) received by the facility is not considered waste and therefore does not require import authorization by the board as long as the facility extracts the fluoride and sells commercial products manufactured from the fluoride.

"Steve Laflin and other members of his company have done an extraordinary job ensuring the public and the state are informed about their plans," said Rocky Mountain Board Chairman Ron Curry, who is also Secretary of the Environment. "International Isotopes has made the process go much smoother because they have been proactive."

The order, which the board approved Sept. 14, requires INIS to provide reports to the board so that the board can monitor the operation of the proposed INIS facility. INIS, as required by the order, must notify Executive Director of the Board Leonard Slosky within five business days of the following occurrences:

- The amount of total uranium, in any form, at the INIS Plant that exceeds 2,000,000 KgU
- The amount of DUO that exceeds 900,000 KgU
- The onsite storage of any one DUF6 cylinder or DUO cylinder exceeding 23 months
- If after beginning commercial operation, the INIS plant does not conduct fluorine extraction for more than 90 continuous calendar days.
- If after beginning commercial operation, less than 25 percent (by weight) of the fluoride extracted by INIS within the prior six months remains unsold by INIS

INIS shall provide a yearly report to the executive director of the board on or before Jan. 15 of each year that the INIS plant receives DUF6 or DUO from any facility

The facility, which the company plans to build about 15 miles west of Hobbs, is expected to have an initial deconversion capacity equivalent to processing approximately 575 depleted UF6 tails cylinders per year. The facility will deconvert uranium into end products of high purity, anhydrous hydrofluoric acid and silicon tetrafluoride gas. Those products can be used for a range of industrial manufacturing applications. Uranium waste will be disposed of at a facility outside New Mexico that is licensed to accept that waste. INIS holds patents that give it exclusive rights to the Fluorine Extraction Process.

The board, which is an interstate government agency, administers a compact that provides for the disposal of low level radioactive waste produced within the member states of New Mexico, Nevada and Colorado.

The board is responsible for regulating the import of low level waste from outside the three-state compact region as well as authorizing where in the compact region low level waste may be disposed. Clean Harbors operates a facility in Colorado that has been approved by the board to dispose of certain Naturally Occurring Radioactive Materials wastes. The board also authorizes the export of waste generated in the region that can not be disposed within the region.

The compact, which was created by legislation passed by member states of Colorado, Nevada, and New Mexico, is authorized by federal and state laws. The compact is an independent regulatory organization that is not an agency of any of its member states.

The board consists of one member appointed by the governor of each member state. Governor Richardson appointed Secretary Curry to the board in 2003. Secretary Curry has been chairman since 2007. Gary Baughman serves for Colorado Leo Drozdoff maintains a seat for Nevada. Leonard Slosky, the executive director, is employed by the board. The compact regulates certain aspects of low-level radioactive waste management. The compact has jurisdiction over Naturally Occurring Radioactive Material (NORM) and Technologically-Enhanced Naturally Occurring Radioactive Material (TENORM). For more information, visit [www. www.rmlwb.us](http://www.rmlwb.us) .

For more information, call Marissa Stone Bardino at (505) 827-0314 or (505) 231-0475.

###