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Environment Department Issues Compliance Order with Penalty of \$371,400 to Northwest New Mexico Regional Authority for 15 Solid Waste Violations at Red Rocks Regional Landfill

(Santa Fe, NM) – The New Mexico Environment Department issued an administrative compliance order with a penalty of \$371,400 to Northwest New Mexico Regional Solid Waste Authority for 15 violations at the Red Rocks Regional Landfill in Thoreau.

The authority, which provides solid waste disposal for Gallup, Grants, Milan and surrounding communities in Cibola and McKinley counties, violated the Solid Waste Act and failed to operate the Red Rocks facility in a safe and proper manner (the order is attached).

“The Northwest New Mexico Regional Solid Waste Authority has been entrusted with state permits for the handling of special waste that requires careful handling and disposal guidelines to protect local residents and the environment,” said New Mexico Environment Department Environmental Protection Division Director Jim Norton. “The authority’s history of violations could create a public health hazard if not corrected immediately.”

Red Rocks accepts municipal solid waste, and special wastes, including industrial solid waste, petroleum contaminated soil and other wastes. Special waste requires unique handling, transportation and disposal requirements to ensure the protection of local residents and the environment.

The authority’s violations include failing to apply daily cover, neglecting to apply intermediate cover; failing to control litter; neglecting to confine the working face to the smallest practical area; failing to store scrap tires in a safe manner; neglecting to store scrap metal in a safe manner; failing to conduct methane monitoring; neglecting to collect leachate appropriately; failing to implement a waste screening plan; accepting improperly characterized special waste; failing to document special waste disposal locations; neglecting to provide records or plans for inspection; accepting special waste without a proper manifest; and failing to operate a solid waste facility in a safe manner.

The authority failed to store waste to prevent blowing litter and the buildup of insects and rodents. The order contains a schedule of compliance containing 15 conditions the authority must meet, including immediately

applying a daily cover at the end of daily operations at Red Rocks; cleaning all litter within the facility's perimeter fence and beyond the fence; implementing a proper waste screening plan; requiring the use of a special waste manifest for each load of that waste arriving at the landfill; and disposing of solid waste only within permitted disposal cells and refraining from stockpiling or mixing solid waste with recyclable materials at scrap tire and scrap metal storage areas.

The authority obtained a Solid Waste Permit from the State for Red Rocks in 1995. The department discovered the violations at Red Rocks during a two-day inspection in June.

The authority has the option to request a meeting with the department to arrive at terms for settlement of the order, thereby avoiding the need for a public hearing.

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

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