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**Environment Secretary Approves Conditional Five-Year Permit for Red Rocks Regional  
Landfill**

*Permit Will Allow Communities in McKinley and Cibola Counties to Continue to be Served by Facility*

(Santa Fe, NM) – New Mexico Environment Department Secretary Ron Curry approved a five-year conditional permit for Red Rocks Regional Landfill near Thoreau, N.M.

Secretary Curry's approval of the permit will save several communities served by the facility considerable money because trash will not have to be trucked to landfills in Farmington or Albuquerque.

"I granted the permit on a conditional basis because of Red Rocks' past negative compliance history with the department," Secretary Curry said. "However, the landfill displayed complete compliance with state regulations during its last inspection in January and we expect managers of the facility to continue that pattern to protect public health and the environment. The landfill serves various communities and provides a needed service in McKinley County."

Secretary Curry acted quickly on facility's application for the new permit because Red Rocks will reach capacity before its current permit expires. Secretary Curry's Final Order for the landfill grants the conditional permit if the facility complies with all regulations and an affirmative action plan. The order also provides for a second conditional permit period of fifteen years if the first conditions are met.

Managers of the facility applied for a permit modification that will allow the facility to accept special waste, expand the facility to cells nine and 26 and increase the site acreage to 160 acres. 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 landfill is expected to reach capacity in April, 2009.

The landfill, which is about 6.5 miles northwest of Thoreau in McKinley County, serves the City of Gallup, City of Grants, McKinley County, Cibola County, the Village of Milan, the Navajo Nation, Zuni Pueblo, Laguna Pueblo, Window Rock and communities in Arizona. The facility serves 23,506 households of 84,500 people, 131 schools, 198 civic organizations, and 302 commercial establishments within 50 chapters of the

Navajo Nation. Some members of the Navajo Nation expressed concern that if the permit were not granted, illegal dumping might increase on tribal lands.

The department held a hearing for the permit Jan. 27 in Gallup. Secretary Curry adopted Hearing Officer Felicia Orth's recommendations in his Final Order.

The department, during its last inspection of the landfill Jan. 23, found Red Rocks conducted landfill operations in compliance with state laws. Inspectors observed operators consistently and appropriately applying a daily cover of soil over waste; kept the active face of the landfill as small as practical; used a calendar program to remind operators of methane monitoring procedures; addressed recyclable materials; and maintained disposal records. An inspector noted no violations of the rules or of the existing solid waste facility permit. In addition, managers of the landfill hired consultants McGee and Associates to help the facility ensure continued improvement of its operations.

The department issued an administrative compliance order to Northwest New Mexico Regional Solid Waste Authority in December for 15 violations at Red Rocks. The order alleged the authority failed to operate that facility in a safe and proper manner. The department and the authority entered into a Settlement and Stipulated Final Order on Jan. 21 that assessed a penalty of \$120,000 for those violations.

The authority obtained a Solid Waste Permit from the state for Red Rocks in 1995.

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