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### **State Environment Secretary Denies Permit for Socorro Landfill**

(Santa Fe, NM) New Mexico Environment Department Secretary Ron Curry denied a Solid Waste Permit for Socorro Landfill because of the city's 20-year history of noncompliance at its registered landfill.

That landfill, which is four miles south of the city, has been open since 1988 and prior to state regulations that require landfills to be lined. The city was seeing a 10-year permit for that landfill or a transfer station.

"Given this poor record of performance at the registered landfill, the city may not have the ability to oversee the more complex construction, management and operation involved in a permitted landfill," said New Mexico Environment Department Secretary Ron Curry. "It appears the city has too many competing priorities – including a new wastewater treatment plant and an airport – to effectively manage a landfill."

Secretary Curry adopted Hearing Officer Felicia Orth's recommendations by denying the permit. The denial requires the city to stop accepting waste at the landfill by Dec. 31, 2009 and to have the facility capped by June 30, 2010.

The department's Solid Waste Bureau cited the landfill between March 1999 and February 2008 for numerous violations, including failure to maintain an authorized waste training program; lacking complete load inspection sheets; failing to implement a methane monitoring plan; failing to control litter; failing to properly apply a daily cover; lacking an intermediate cover; failing to provide records on request; lacking an acceptable contingency plan; lacking an adequate load inspection plan; failing to prevent unauthorized access; failing to post signs; lacking proper storage for recyclables; failing to characterize special waste; and having unauthorized disposal or attempted disposal of liquid waste, according to the hearing officer's report.

Eleven inspections of the landfill between May 1988 and January 1998 showed violations for having blown or excessive litter, lacking a waste cover, failing to have an authorized waste plan, lacking methane sampling and failing to have a contingency plan, according to the report. Those violations resulted in six notices of violation.

State regulations require that an operator shows an ability to operate a landfill before a permit can be granted.

The bureau offered the alternative to the city that it hire a private contractor to manage its landfill but the city rejected that option, according to the report.

After the city stops accepting waste at the landfill, garbage would have to be hauled to Valencia County Landfill near Los Lunas.

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