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Environment Secretary Requires Town of Vaughn to Close Landfill in 180 Days

Order Assesses \$214,100 Penalty against Town for Numerous Solid Waste Violations

(Santa Fe, NM) New Mexico Environment Department Secretary Ron Curry issued a final order requiring the Town of Vaughn to close its landfill and pay a \$214,100 civil penalty because of numerous and serious violations of the state's Solid Waste Act.

The order requires Vaughn to submit a landfill closure plan to NMED within 30 days and to close and stop accepting waste within 180 days.

"I made the decision to require Vaughn to close its landfill because of numerous violations at the facility that pose health threats to local residents and environmental risks," said New Mexico Environment Department Secretary Ron Curry. "We tried to work with Vaughn to help it come into compliance with state laws but that process did not result in the correction of repeated solid waste violations."

The Vaughn Landfill, a municipal facility, is located approximately one mile west of the town.

The department's Solid Waste Bureau documented the violations after inspections of the facility in May and June 2008. That inspection uncovered serious and repeated violations of the Solid Waste Act and Rules, including failing to submit a permit application or a plan for closing the landfill; failing to acquire financial assurance for third-party closure and monitoring of the landfill; neglecting to apply daily cover; failing to conduct groundwater contaminant detection monitoring and obtain an approved Ground Water Monitoring Plan; failing to remove recyclable material from the landfill in a timely manner; neglecting to control litter; neglecting to maintain access controls to prevent potential entrance by unauthorized persons and large animals; and failing to implement a routine methane monitoring program through the development of a Methane Monitoring Plan.

Vaughn has the option once it closes its landfill to transfer its solid waste to the nearby regional landfills in nearby Tatum, Santa Rosa or Torrance County. Secretary Curry made his decision on the closure of the landfill following a public hearing on the matter.

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