



SUSANA MARTINEZ, GOVERNOR

Ryan Flynn, *Cabinet Secretary-Designate*

Butch Tongate, *Deputy Secretary*

NEWS RELEASE

August 22, 2013

Contact: Jim Winchester
Communications Director
New Mexico Environment Department
(505)231-8800 / jim.winchester@state.nm.us

New Mexico Environment Department Announces Aggressive Clean-Up Campaign For Kirtland Bulk Fuels Facility Spill

Albuquerque – New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) Secretary-Designate Ryan Flynn announced Wednesday night an aggressive campaign that establishes deadlines for interim clean-up measures for the Bulk Fuels Facility Spill at Kirtland Air Force Base. These immediate actions will expand the current clean-up effort and ensure that all necessary steps are being taken to protect Albuquerque's drinking water.

"After directing the Air Force to drill 115 monitoring wells over the past few years to characterize the fuel plume, we now have enough data to begin enacting interim measures to aggressively remove fuel and contaminants," said Secretary-Designate Ryan Flynn. "We are instructing the Air Force to implement interim clean-up measures by set dates to all portions of the fuel spill."

The campaign requires the Air Force implement interim measures to address three distinct contamination areas of the underground fuel spill: (1) The Vadose Zone (contaminated fuel in the soils), (2) The Light Non Aqueous Phase Liquid – LNAPL (light liquid fuel floating on the water table underground), and (3) Ethylene Dibromide – EDB (heavier dissolved phase liquid contaminate that has migrated away from the fuel plume). These interim measures will remediate contamination and produce data results that will assist in the selection of the final remedy, as defined under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA).

Task 1: The New Mexico Environment Department requires the Air Force to have an expanded Soil Vapor Extraction System in place and operational by March 31, 2014 to address the Vadose Zone.

Task 2: The New Mexico Environment Department requires the Air Force to design and implement an interim measure to treat the Light Non Aqueous Phase Liquid (LNAPL) by June 30, 2014.

Task 3: The New Mexico Environment Department requires the Air Force to design and implement an interim measure to treat the Ethylene Dibromide (EDB) by December 31, 2014.

In addition to the three tasks outlined, the New Mexico Environment Department requires the Air Force to develop and test pump an extraction well by October 31, 2013.

"We will not let this spill impact Albuquerque's drinking water," said Secretary-Designate Flynn. "The Environment Department is requiring the Air Force to implement aggressive interim measures in the months ahead to ensure Albuquerque's drinking water remains safe."

Secretary-Designate Flynn's announcement and comments came at Wednesday night's Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority board meeting. In recent weeks, Secretary-Designate Flynn organized a new collaborative team to coordinate clean-up response that includes the Water Authority, in addition to the New Mexico Environment Department, the City of Albuquerque, and the Air Force. "We are encouraged that the dialogue between all interested parties has increased in recent months and are convinced we are at a critical turning point in this clean-up effort," said Water Authority Director Mark Sanchez. "We intend to work with the Governor and the New Mexico Environment Department to make sure the Air Force is doing everything possible to clean-up this spill. The implementation of interim measures will mark a major push forward in this effort."

At the direction of the New Mexico Environment Department, the Air Force has already been utilizing a custom-built Soil Vapor Extraction Unit at the site for several months to burn off fuel vapors trapped in the soil's Vadose Zone. "The Environment Department has set an aggressive schedule to put interim measures in place that will allow clean-up to begin simultaneously while a final remedy is being selected and designed, which we agree is exactly the right approach," said Colonel Tom Miller, Installation Commander of Kirtland Air Force Base. "With synergy between the Environment Department, the Water Authority, and the Air Force, we have the tools in place to execute this."

Interim measures to address the clean-up deadlines set by the New Mexico Environment will include the best available technology. In addition to an expanded Soil Vapor Extraction system, additional techniques could include pump and treat, interceptor wells, air sparging and other technologies that the Air Force contractor may propose.

United States Senator Tom Udall offered support of the new campaign. "I have been working closely with the Air Force to ensure that it is dedicating the necessary resources and conducting the proper oversight to clean up this fuel spill, and I will continue to be a strong partner with the state, the water utility authority and the Defense Department," said Senator Udall. "Protecting Albuquerque's water supply is absolutely critical to the city's public health. I congratulate the Environment Department, the utility authority and the Defense Department for their progress working together toward a solution."

It's estimated that fuel leaked from Kirtland Air Force Base's refueling site over several decades after it was installed in the 1950s. The spill was first discovered and reported to the state back in 1999. In 2007, the spill was first confirmed to have reached the groundwater. Over the past several years, some of the monitoring wells indicate the EDB contamination has moved approximately one-mile from the former fuel facility. These monitoring wells also show the EDB contamination is about 4,000 feet from the Ridgecrest Drinking Water Wells.

###