



MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM
GOVERNOR

JAMES C. KENNEY
CABINET SECRETARY

VIA EMAIL AND U.S. MAIL

July 17, 2026

The Honorable Scott Mason
Regional Administrator
United States Environment Protection Agency Region 6
1201 Elm Street, Suite 500
Dallas, Texas 75270-2102

Re: Hexavalent Chromium Contamination Threat to the Pueblo of San Ildefonso from the U.S. Department of Energy at Los Alamos National Laboratory

Dear Regional Administrator Mason,

From 1956 through 1972, hexavalent chromium contaminated cooling water from Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) into Sandia Canyon. Investigations beginning in 2004 confirmed hexavalent chromium contamination in the regional aquifer. In response, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) deployed an interim pump-and-treat/injection system in 2017 and expanded it in 2018. However, hexavalent chromium concentrations rose and contamination proved deeper and wider than expected, prompting the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) to halt only the injection operations in March 2023 meaning DOE could continue to remediate the plume. However, the U.S. DOE elected to stop the interim pump-and-treat operation.

In December of 2024, an independent technical review team that was jointly convened by NMED and DOE identified shortcomings in previous DOE remediation efforts related to the hexavalent chromium plume. The review recommended continuing only a partial restart of the interim pump-and-treat/injection system while additional investigatory work proceeded, including sampling from a new regional aquifer monitoring well, known as SIMR-3, located on Pueblo de San Ildefonso land.

Monitoring results from SIMR-3 subsequently confirmed that the hexavalent chromium plume had migrated beyond LANL boundaries onto Pueblo land. Groundwater sampling in October 2025 measured concentrations of 72.9 µg/L—exceeding the Pueblo's and the State's groundwater standard of 50 µg/L. Subsequent SIMR-3 sampling showed continued increases, with measurements of 90 µg/L in March 2026 and 98.9 µg/L in May 2026. The migration and exceedances present an ongoing threat to the Pueblo's aquifer, surface waters, and water-dependent cultural and ceremonial practices.

In February 2026, NMED issued civil enforcement actions to DOE seeking mitigation and cleanup of the almost 75-year-old contamination that continues to migrate off-site and threaten drinking water of New Mexicans and the Pueblo of San Ildefonso. Following the issuance of the civil enforcement actions, DOE completely disengaged from technical conversations with NMED and the Pueblo of San Ildefonso.

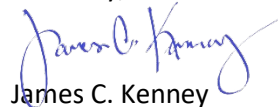
Last month, NMED met with Raymond Martinez, Lieutenant Governor of the Pueblo of San Ildefonso, to discuss ongoing impacts of the hexavalent chromium plume on the Pueblo community. During this meeting, Lt. Governor Martinez reiterated the Pueblo's request for funding to support the significant and growing costs associated with responding to the crisis.

In light of the Pueblo's request and given that EPA directly implements the Safe Drinking Water Act in Indian Country, I respectfully ask that you provide federal funding and technical support in support the Pueblo of San Ildefonso for establishing an environmental monitoring and response program related to the hexavalent chromium plume on a recurring basis.

Further, I encourage EPA to work with the Pueblo to seek federal support under CERCLA Section 128(a) (Tribal Response Program). The EPA could enter into a Cooperative Agreement with the Pueblo to participate in response and investigation efforts and fund that work, including pairing Section 126 and Section 128(a) grants to help the Pueblo build Tribal oversight and response capacity as quickly as possible.

I ask that you and your team act swiftly to fund the Pueblo de San Ildefonso in support of safeguarding their drinking water resources.

Sincerely,



James C. Kenney
Cabinet Secretary

cc: The Honorable Christopher A. Moquino, Governor, Pueblo of San Ildefonso
The Honorable Raymond Martinez, Lieutenant Governor, Pueblo of San Ildefonso
The Honorable Josett D. Monette, Esq., Cabinet Secretary, New Mexico Indian Affairs Department