

Final Approved 9-30-09
NORTHERN NEW MEXICO CITIZENS' ADVISORY BOARD
Environmental Monitoring, Surveillance and Remediation Committee

Recommendation to the Department of Energy
No. 2009-11
Request LANS to Prepare a Hydrological Report which includes Information
Regarding Existing and Planned New Wells

Background:

The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) Order on Consent, March 2005, specifies steps and timetables for cleanup of Legacy wastes at the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL). In order to start this process, especially relevant to under ground contaminants, it was necessary to characterize the rock formations/landscape/water beneath laboratory areas. Hydrological plans help provide information on where to drill wells in order to obtain data that geographically covers areas where waste is present.

Wells were drilled at multiple locations to characterize the soil and water beneath the surface. It was later found that data from some of these wells could not be used for monitoring some contaminants because of the use of drilling fluids during well installation.

Thus plans were made to drill additional wells using different drilling techniques. Some of these wells have been installed during calendar year 2009. More wells are planned including some using the newly available (American Reinvestment and Recovery Act) ARRA Funding.

Comments and Observations:

Several hydrological studies have been completed. However, these studies deal with the preliminary set of wells. Additional, high levels of Chromium (Cr6) have recently been measured at a few wells. Further study of the Chromium plume has also required new wells.

The Northern New Mexico Citizen's Advisory Board (NNMCAB) has closely followed the effort to install effective wells and obtain representational data.

However, a comprehensive plan describing the new wells and how they will be utilized, in conjunction with existing wells, has not been available to the NNMCAB. NNMCAB feels that a hydrogeologic plan, including existing and new wells, should be available to the public. This report would inform the public and be valuable because of the use of better drilling techniques, assuring better data for models, studies and conclusions about cleanup.

Recommendation:

- 1) DOE request Los Alamos National Security (LANL) prepare a hydrological report which includes existing and new wells, including wells in the planning stage but not yet drilled.
- 2) This report should include detailed specifications about each well and be made available to the public as soon as possible.
- 3) Interim and other related reports be made available to the public as soon as written and in such a way that they can be easily found on the LANL website.

Intent:

The intent of the Recommendation is to have a comprehensive plan available to the public. This plan would give the public confidence that correct approaches are being used to characterize and monitor the legacy wastes at LANL.

References:

1. LANL Documents:

- a. LA-UR-14263-MS Los Alamos National's Hydrogeologic Studies of the Pajarito Plateau (1998-2004).
- b. LA-UR-01-6511 Hydrogeologic Work plan May 22, 1998.