**Petition calling on EPA to regulate LANL municipal storm sewer systems under the Clean Water Act**

**DESCRIPTION**

**Press Release**

**EPA Moves Forward With New Storm Water Requirements for Los Alamos**

*This action, the first of its kind in the nation, is a result of an Amigos Bravos petition to EPA*

**MARCH 10, 2015 ––**The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced yesterday that it was making a preliminary determination that storm water discharges from Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) and urban areas of Los Alamos County are contributing to exceedances in water quality standards and therefore require a Clean Water Act permit. This decision was made in response to a June 30th 2014 petition by Amigos Bravos.

The petition, the first of it’s kind in the nation, outlines connections between storm water discharges from urban areas such as parking lots, buildings, and other developed areas at LANL and in Los Alamos County and water quality standard exceedances in tributaries to the Rio Grande on the Pajarito Plateau. The petition called on EPA to officially designate municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s) at LANL and urban portions of Los Alamos County as storm water discharges that require regulation under the Clean Water Act.

EPA, in their March 5, 2015 response letter to Amigos Bravos’ petition stated “EPA has made a preliminary determination that discharges of storm water from municipal separate storm sewer systems on LANL property and urban portions of Los Alamos County result in or have the potential to result in exceedances of state water quality standards, including impairment of designated uses, or other significant water quality impacts such as habitat and biological impacts.”

“This preliminary decision by EPA is an important first step towards protecting the Rio Grande and tributaries on the Pajarito Plateau from contaminants such as gross alpha (a measurement of overall radioactivity), heavy metals, and PCBs,” said Rachel Conn, Interim Executive Director for Amigos Bravos. “Regulation of these discharges will help to ensure that downstream communities receive clean water for drinking, agriculture, and recreation.”

Two of NM’s largest cities – Santa Fe and Albuquerque- divert drinking water downstream of these contaminated storm water discharges.

“LANL is located within our Sacred Ancestral Homelands and on top of a major watershed that nourishes our communities,” said Marian Naranjo, Director of Honor Our Pueblo Existence and Council Member of Communities for Clean Water. “It is paramount that whomever resides there must be responsible for unsafe chemicals and toxins that can harm our watershed and people.”

A 30-day public comment period on the preliminary designation will begin once notice of the decision is officially published in the federal register, something that is expected in the next 7-10 days. If the designation is finalized, EPA will write a draft discharge permit that will outline steps and deadlines that LANL, Los Alamos County, and the New Mexico Department of Transportation will have to take to ensure that storm water discharges from urban areas in the designated area are not causing water quality violations. A draft permit will be subject to a public comment period and opportunity for a public hearing.

**About Amigos Bravos**

Formed in 1988, Amigos Bravos is a statewide conservation organization guided by social justice principles and dedicated to protecting and restoring the waters of New Mexico. Amigos Bravos is a founding member of Communities for Clean Water. Visit www.amigosbravos.org.

**About Honor Our Pueblo Existence**

Honor Our Pueblo Existence (HOPE) embraces the Pueblo teachings of love, respect, and care and works to improve the life ways of the Pueblo people in order to provide an enhanced and sustainable environment for generations to come. HOPE is a founding member of Communities for Clean Water.

Visit [www.facebook.com/honorourpueblo.existence](http://www.facebook.com/honorourpueblo.existence)

**About Communities for Clean Water**

Communities for Clean Water is a coalition of organizations whose mission is to ensure that community waters impacted by Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) are kept safe for drinking, agriculture, sacred ceremonies, and a sustainable future. Visit [www.ccwnewmex.org](http://www.ccwnewmex.org/)

* [PDF of Final Petition](http://ccwnewmexico.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Amigos-Bravos-Petition-063014-Final.pdf)
* [Statement of Facts](http://ccwnewmexico.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Statement-of-Facts-063014-Final.pdf)
* [Letter to EPA from CCW](http://ccwnewmexico.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/150615.CCW_.MS4_.Determination.pdf)