

For more information contact Marissa Stone, NMED Communications Director, at (505) 827-0314 or (505) 231-0475.

Letter follows:

October 1, 2007

Governor Rick Perry
Office of the Governor
State Insurance Building
Austin, Texas 78701

Re: Renewal of the ASARCO, Inc.'s Air Quality Permit

Dear Governor Perry:

I am writing to express the State of New Mexico's opposition to the proposed reinstatement of the ASARCO, Inc. air quality permit by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). I have serious concerns about the environmental harm and public health impacts that may occur with the renewal of the ASARCO El Paso plant's air quality permit, especially in Doña Ana County, New Mexico. Our states share the Paso del Norte air shed. We are concerned about additional impacts from air pollution from the plant on New Mexico citizens as well as the residents in Texas. The residents in this area of our state are already burdened with pollution issues that negatively affect their health and environment.

New Mexico has voiced technical concerns about the permit renewal for ASARCO for the last three years. Monitoring in the Paso del Norte air shed has shown elevated levels of ozone and particulate matter. Along with air pollution issues, southern Doña Ana County and Sunland Park, New Mexico have soils contaminated with lead due, in part, to the ASARCO El Paso plant.

I urge you to reconsider the proposed reinstatement of the ASARCO El Paso air quality permit. The potential negative impacts to public health and the environment in southern New Mexico and western Texas will be significant. I look forward to working with the State of Texas to protect and improve air quality and the environment in the Paso del Norte region. Please have your staff contact Sarah Cottrell, my Energy & Environmental Policy Advisor, at sarah.cottrell@state.nm.us or 505-476-2241 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Bill Richardson
Governor of New Mexico