



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION IX

75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

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JUN 27 1996

NAVAJO AREA OFFICE
REAL ESTATE SERVICES

(W-6-3)

June 21, 1996

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OIL CON. DIV.
DIST. 3

Mary Lou Drywater
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Navajo Area Office
P.O. Box 1060
Gallup, NM 87305

NAVAJO AREA OFFICE
DIVISION OF REAL ESTATE SERVICES

Dear Ms. Drywater:

It has come to our attention that the grazing permittees on the Navajo Tribal lease 14-20-603-5024 are concerned about the continued leakage of oil and saltwater from two of the wells on this lease. The wells in question are the #20-2 injection well and #22-31 temporarily abandoned well. The complaint comes from David Burbank of the Shiprock area grazing committee. The permittees are concerned about the health of their livestock drinking from the ponds created by the leakage. We are concerned about protection of the environment as well as the threat to the livestock resulting from the discharges.

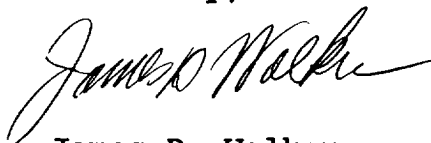
We understand from previous discussions with BIA and BLM staff that the former owner/operator (Vista Resources, Inc,) abandoned these wells several years ago without plugging the wells or reclaiming the disturbed areas on the lease. We are also informed that BIA holds a bond in the amount of \$15,000 for the lease, and that BIA intends to use these funds and perhaps State funds to plug the wells. The leaking wells should be plugged as soon as possible to prevent further damage to the environment and to protect the livestock.

Please inform Mr. Burbank and EPA of your plans and schedule for plugging the leaking wells. Mr. Burbank's mailing address is P.O. Box 3561, Shiprock, NM 87420 and his telephone number is (505)368-5723.

The plugging plan for the #20-2 injection well should be submitted to the EPA Region 9 Underground Injection Control Program for approval. EPA should be notified at least two weeks in advance of plugging the injection well so that an EPA representative can arrange to witness the plugging operations.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter. If you have any questions please call me at (415)744-1833.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James D. Walker". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

James D. Walker
Environmental Engineer

cc: David Burbank, Shiprock Area Grazing Committee
Lorenda Joe, Acting Director, Navajo Nation EPA
Charmaine Tso, Navajo Nation GPC Program