

Feds to pay \$7,500 in LOOW discharge

Payment a 'service charge,' not a fine

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They aren't calling it a fine, nevertheless, federal officials have agreed to pay a \$7,500 "service charge" after discharging 700,000 gallons of wastewater from a radioactive storage site in Lewiston without a state permit.

John Spagnoli, state Department of Environmental Conservation regional director, said yesterday the U.S. Department of Energy also agreed to obtain the necessary permit before releasing additional wastes from the former Lake Ontario Ordnance Works complex on Pletcher Road.

The DEC cited the federal agency following a Nov. 11 discharge into a ditch that drains into Lake Ontario.

E. Lea Keller, director of the Department of Energy's technical services division, said earlier the wastes were discharged as a precautionary measure when storage ponds filled with rainwater and melted snow.

Keller said there had been discussions

with the DEC and pleas for an emergency permit to avoid an overflow onto radiation-contaminated ground. He said the environmental consequences would have been far more serious if the ponds had overflowed.

Spagnoli said the DEC wanted an additional chemical analysis of the wastes before a discharge permit could be issued.

A spokesman for Bechtel National Inc., caretakers of the Lewiston site, told Lewiston officials this week that all radioactive materials had been removed before the liquid wastes were pumped into a nearby ditch.

Spagnoli said the agency would continue to review the federal agency's request for a discharge permit, "and it won't be too long from now before we make a decision."

Robert Rudolph, project manager for Bechtel, said the wastewater accumulated during remedial construction this summer. He said the work was designed to stabilize the radioactive wastes that have been stored on the site since 1944.