

# **PACA**

**CREATING COMMUNITY**

**PEÑASCO AREA  
COMMUNITIES  
ASSOCIATION, INC.  
P O BOX 381  
PEÑASCO, NM 87553  
575.587.1728  
e-mail  
paca9@msn.com**

## **PACA Board**

Edwin Fernández, President  
575.587.0264  
Eric Mack, VP  
575.587.2645  
Juanita Duran, Secretary  
575.587.2061  
Matilda Gonzalez, Treasurer  
575.587.0443  
Cecilia Lopez, Member  
505.587.8015  
Gloria Maestas, Member  
575.587.2583  
Faby Mondragon, Member  
575.587.2083  
Amanda Lopez, Youth Member  
575.587.1011

*Peñasco Area Communities Association, Inc. (PACA) was incorporated with the NM Public Regulation Commission on August 1995. The Articles of Incorporation were amended on August 28, 2008 to reflect more appropriately its present day purpose.*

*Article Three of the amended articles of incorporation, purpose for which the corporation is organized, reads as follows: The Corporation, "Peñasco Area Communities Association, Inc. (PACA) is a community based organization and will be operated for charitable, educational and community preservation purposes and in particular to provide leadership, assistance and resources to community members and initiatives in the Peñasco area and for the purposes of engaging in any lawful act or activity for which corporations may be organized under New Mexico Law."*

November 16, 2010

The Honorable Dr. Steven Chu, Secretary  
Department of Energy  
1000 Independence Ave SW  
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Secretary Chu,

I am writing to express my great concern about possible environmental impacts, and the lack of analysis and public discussion of impacts, from the proposed "Nuclear Facility" at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL). The Nuclear Facility is part of the Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Replacement (CMRR) project.

This proposed semi-underground facility for storing, handling, and processing plutonium would have a big impact on the region. We in Peñasco, are 40 miles downwind of Los Alamos as the crow flies, and we were never informed about this. Except for the interstate highways, this is by far the largest government project ever built in New Mexico and yet it has no applicable Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The project needs to be halted while this important analysis is done.

The multi-billion dollar project appears to have quietly grown through recent years to the point where local officials like me are almost completely in the dark about it. Our understanding is that approximately \$676,000 a day is being spent. This, while so many basic services for our citizens are in the process of being cut. People want to know how their taxpayer money is being spent and to have some say in things that directly affect their health. The money spent per day is approximately the annual budget of many health clinics. We need baseline health studies in our communities because it seems that our cancer rates may be higher than the norm.

The project has been delayed for some years already. I understand that there isn't even a preliminary design or projected cost at present. It seems premature to proceed without these. So isn't this a good time to thoroughly and publicly check for better alternatives which may have become available, during the long period when the cost and impacts of this one have grown so much?

Many circumstances surrounding this project have changed since it was proposed. It may not even be needed. It may not be worth the cost. Quicker, safer, and cheaper alternatives may exist.

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I therefore respectfully request that the Department of Energy (DOE) prepare a new EIS for the CMRR Nuclear Facility and its alternatives, pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and its implementing regulations. A mere "supplemental" EIS will not suffice, because it's important to re-examine all the alternatives, including various alternatives to the project itself. It's important to me that this EIS is preceded by the required scoping process, so that my constituents and I, and other governmental agencies, tribes, and independent technical experts, can fully participate in the development and discussion of project alternatives and scope of analysis

As you are aware, NEPA requires federal agencies to fully to provide notice and comment opportunities to local governments regarding proposed major federal actions, including allowing them help vet alternatives, and including analysis of the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts upon the human environment. None of this has happened. We are only a neighborhood association but we are the closest thing we have in Peñasco to a local "government" and we represent a community that is directly affected by the lab and its projects.

I want to help DOE reach a sound decision on the proposed Nuclear Facility. A new EIS that examines the full range of alternatives to the project, while current investments are paused, will facilitate public participation and lead to a good decision.

Sincerely,



Edwin G. Fernandez, President  
Peñasco Area Communities Association, Inc.

cc: Mr. John Tegtmeier, CMRR-NF SEIS Document Manager  
U. S. Department of Energy, National Nuclear Security Administration  
Los Alamos Site Office  
3747 West Jemez Road, TA-3  
Building 1410, Los Alamos, New Mexico 87544

✓ Los Alamos Study Group  
2901 Summit Place NE  
Albuquerque, NM 87106

PACA Board, File