

# Hearings Planned on Future of Los Alamos

Lab, U.S. nuclear weapons program are at the turning point--**YOUR voice can make a difference**

**Nuclear weapons factory and nuclear dump? Or "Green" Lab Devoted to Nonproliferation, Sustainable Technology, and Global Security? We have a choice.**

Bowing to public pressure, the Department of Energy (DOE) has initiated a Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement (SWEIS) process for Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL). On the dates shown below, **YOU can speak out about the future of LANL.**

As part of the SWEIS, the DOE is required to consider reasonable alternative futures for LANL. So far, no alternatives have been proposed. Will LANL make plutonium bomb parts, like the Rocky Flats Plant used to do? Will LANL become a sort of "Jiffy-Lube" for the nuclear weapons complex, servicing weapons for the U.S. stockpile? DOE and LANL plans include bringing some 25 tons of plutonium, and hundreds of grams of tritium, to LANL for storage, processing, and incorporation into nuclear weapons. Just 27 micrograms of plutonium dust is approximately a fatal dose for humans; a single drop of water made with tritium will contaminate 2 billion gallons of water to the EPA health standard.

Will LANL be chosen to accept so-called "low-level" nuclear waste from other DOE sites? Will DOE open a dump here for chemical and radioactive "mixed" waste that is twice the size of WIPP? Or will LANL begin devoting its substantial energies toward alternative energy and other green technologies that could spawn healthy new businesses in New Mexico--and increase our real national security? Other states like California are now in a good position to get the lion's share of DOE's "green" initiatives, while New Mexico is set up to get nuclear weapons maintenance, nuclear waste, and contamination for thousands of years. **If we do not speak, our silence will be taken as assent to all things nuclear.**

## LANL SWEIS Hearing Schedule

Date	Time	City	Location
September 14	2:00-4:00 & 6:00-8:30 pm	Los Alamos	Civic Auditorium, L.A. High School, 1300 Diamond Dr.
September 21 and 22	2:00-5:00 & 6:30-9:30 pm	Espanola	Sr. Citizens's Stroke Center, 735 Vietnam Vet. Mem. Rd.
September 28 and 29	1:00-4:00 & 6:30-9:30 pm	Santa Fe	Sweeney Center 201 W. Marcy
October 12 and 13	1:00-4:00 & 6:30-9:30 pm	Los Alamos	Los Alamos Inn 2201 Trinity

For further information call the Los Alamos Study Group (LASG) at 982-7747 or Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety (CCNS) at 986-1973. Volunteers are needed for postering, telephoning, tabling, and outreach coordination; if you can help please call one of the above groups. **CCNS will host a workshop about the hearings on September 20 at 6:30 pm at 107 Cienega St. in Santa Fe.**

This flyer was prepared by the Los Alamos Study Group. Defending Northern New Mexico from LANL's misconceived, dangerous, and unnecessary nuclear projects is costly, and donations in any amount would be gratefully accepted. If you wish to make a tax-deductible contribution, make out the check to the "Institute for Regional Education/LASG." Our address is 212 E. Marcy St., Santa Fe, NM 87501.

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# Los Alamos Site-Wide EIS Background and Issues

## Background

LANL is fast becoming a central hub in the nuclear weapons maintenance and manufacturing complex. To this end, LANL hopes to build literally dozens of new nuclear weapons design and fabrication facilities, together with major nuclear waste disposal facilities that may serve not just LANL but the entire DOE complex. The work that was once done at Rocky Flats and other derelict and/or contaminated DOE facilities is now slated to come here, albeit on a smaller scale.

Faced with this deluge of new waste-generating operations and new dumps--too many to fight one at a time--**more than sixty New Mexico and national organizations petitioned Secretary of Energy Hazel O'Leary in April of this year for a moratorium on all major construction projects at LANL until the completion of a site-wide EIS (SWEIS).** Led by the Eight Northern Indian Pueblos Council, the petitioners included the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, the Mayor and three city councilors in Santa Fe, and well-known national groups like the Natural Resources Defense Council and Greenpeace. Subsequently, the Santa Fe City Council also petitioned the Lab for a moratorium.

The SWEIS has now been granted. The public and tribes have gained an important forum, but **none of the important issues are yet resolved.** We are now in the "pre-scoping" period for the SWEIS, during which DOE is taking comments from the public on the overall direction of its analysis. **Public comment is crucial.**

## Critical Issues

► **Which projects will be subject to analysis in the SWEIS?** Lab managers, having glanced at an uncertain future, seem to find the past more attractive. With DOE's blessing, they are now proposing at least 82 additional nuclear weapons facilities for LANL, plus another 18 waste management facilities and 12 other support and "civilian" facilities. Total cost: nearly \$5 billion in buildings and equipment alone. Approximately 99 of these projects have start dates on or before the SWEIS's ten-year planning horizon (2007). With these new facilities, LANL plans to maintain its focus on nuclear weapons forever--indeed to increase it more than ever. The SWEIS must by law analyze the cumulative effect of all proposed actions on the environment, culture, and economic base of the region. Yet DOE so far proposes to analyze only 23 projects in the SWEIS.

► **Should the SWEIS analyze the risks and costs of accepting nuclear waste from other DOE sites for incineration and/or burial?** LANL plans to expand its nuclear waste dump to make room for new waste generation, and is moving fast to create a new dump for chemically- and radioactively-hazardous "mixed" waste that would be twice the size of WIPP. Should LANL's radwaste incinerator be fired up? What are the risks?

► **Which projects should be delayed pending the SWEIS outcome?** If, as DOE proposes, big new weapons facilities are built during the 3 years it will take to carry out the SWEIS process, many--perhaps most--of the critical decisions will already have been made. All major construction, especially in the weapons program, should be delayed until the SWEIS is completed.

► **Which alternatives should be evaluated in the SWEIS?** The DOE has offered no alternatives for LANL's future. By law, DOE must consider "other reasonable courses of action," including options like:

- devoting LANL to global disarmament, treaty verification, and nonproliferation, rather than perpetuating nuclear armaments,
- building up LANL's alternative energy programs,
- increasing LANL's work on its own cleanup and that of other DOE sites,
- developing "green" new industrial technologies,
- continuing or increasing basic scientific research,

or combinations of ideas like these. What are **your** ideas?

► **Should DOE give free land to Los Alamos County, as they are planning to do--or to the Pueblos, from whom it was taken without compensation?**

► **Should the SWEIS analyze the risks to tourism of increased nuclear waste generation and dumping?** What about the economic benefits of a civilian mission for LANL?

► **Should the United States make additional or replacement nuclear weapons? If so, should this be done at Los Alamos? What are the risks? Is it necessary to do this now--or should we seek further mutual arms reductions?**

The work of Rocky Flats, making the plutonium "triggers" for bombs, can now be done only at Los Alamos. Do you want this? How much of it do you want? U.S. weapons are expected to last at least another ten years with minimal maintenance, if not far longer. Even if you believe in nuclear deterrence, why rush to build new capabilities at Los Alamos or anywhere?

► **Should Los Alamos become a maintenance shop for nuclear weapons,** making and installing a variety of spare nuclear parts and recharging tritium bottles? If so, how many weapons are enough? The cost, danger of accidents, and amount of nuclear waste buried on the Pajarito Plateau will all increase with the number of weapons. This relationship should be analyzed in the SWEIS.

► **Should Los Alamos continue to extend its skills in nuclear weapons design, or is the current state of knowledge in bomb design enough?** The DOE and LANL are attempting to sell Congress a multi-billion dollar program called "science-based stockpile stewardship." The central premise of this program, which embraces much of LANL's work, is that the United States must continue to study weapons, compiling more bomb lore, at Cold War spending levels--even after 50 years of all-out effort, 1200 or so nuclear tests, and several dozen designs that went into full-scale production. What are the impacts--economic, social, and environmental--of continuing the arms race solitaire?

► **Should we be designing new "prototype" weapons and putting them "on the shelf" for possible future production?** These are the words lab managers use to describe the Lab's current weapons program, and many of the proposed new facilities are designed to facilitate this goal. Budget and other documents reveal that R&D goals are often oriented toward first-strike weapons.

► **Will big investments in nuclear weapons legitimize them and undercut U.S. nonproliferation goals?** Twenty-five years ago when the Nonproliferation Treaty was signed, the United States and the other nuclear weapons states promised that they would eventually get rid of their nuclear arsenals. But even when (or if) the START II reductions by the U.S. and Russia are implemented, there will be more nuclear weapons than there were when that treaty was signed. How can the U.S. gain the trust and cooperation we need to curb the extremely dangerous spread of nuclear materials and know-how when we are planning to spend billions on major new design facilities at our own weapons labs? Shouldn't the DOE think about this impact, too, in its analysis?

► **Do we really need or want nuclear weapons at all?** High-ranking military officers like General Horner, who directed the air attack against Iraq, have begun to speak out against maintaining a permanent nuclear arsenal. Shockingly, the LANL SWEIS is, for now and the foreseeable future, the only public forum in the United States which can address nuclear weapons policy. That policy, which is secret, is driving LANL's grandiose plans--at the expense of our children, our environment, and our democratic heritage.

## What You Can Do

► **Come to the public hearings planned by DOE.** Although the DOE calls them "informational workshops," a court reporter will be recording **your** comments and questions, and DOE must respond to what you say. You don't have to stick to DOE's technocratic agenda--this is **your** time.

► **Send your comments to the DOE.** The DOE **must** take your comments into account. Send them to:

Ms. Diana Webb  
Los Alamos Area Office/DOE  
528 35th Street  
Los Alamos, NM 87544  
Attn: LANL SWEIS

TEL: (505) 665-6353  
FAX: (505) 665-4504

The deadline for comments will be some time after October 31.

► **Volunteer your time.** Call the Los Alamos Study Group (982-7747) or CCNS (986-1967) if you can help make get the word out, do research on specific projects, or help in other ways.

Copies of the DOE's initial announcement about the SWEIS are available from the LANL Environmental Reading Room, 1450 Central Avenue, Suite 101, Los Alamos, NM 87544, (505) 665-2127 or (800) 543-2342. Further information about the SWEIS can be obtained from the Los Alamos Study Group (who prepared this flyer) or from CCNS at the above numbers. **These are common sense issues, not technical ones! DOE needs everybody's help!**