



# Los Alamos Study Group

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November 16, 2020

## Urgent need for community resilience planning and organizing; local government meetings

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Please endorse the [Call for Sanity not Nuclear Production!](#)

Previous letter, 11/09/20: [The election: Upcoming local government meetings -- please virtually attend!](#)

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### Dear New Mexico activist leaders --

"Everybody knows" we are now in for a hard time. What is less clear to most people is *how much of a hard time*, or *how hard in what ways*, or for *how long* this will last. Well, all our opinion and political leaders are minimizing what's ahead, and what's already begun. "Normal" is gone and it's been gone for a long time.

There is enormous denial about the gravity of our collective situation, and the ones who are most insulated from events -- many of whom are among the most ignorant -- are by far the most influential.

As we know, the deepening crisis in the U.S. has not been resolved by the recent election -- far from it. For reasons largely independent of who occupies the Oval Office or which party controls the Senate, covid cases will continue to rise exponentially, just as they are [all over the West](#) (but not in Asia; for details see [here](#)). Without significant behavioral changes the death toll will rise to World War II levels in this country, as we [warned](#) 9 months ago (see [IHME](#): 371,000-587,000 by 3/1/2021).

Our economic crisis will continue to deepen, and not just because of covid. Further government relief will certainly help buoy recipients but will not fix our [systemic decline](#). Environmental crises will continue to deepen, including the ongoing rapid collapse of a livable climate, including in our state.

We are very pleased that the Governor has called for a special legislative session as soon as possible. While some form of federal covid relief is possible before the lame duck Congress adjourns in December, without concerted action by state and local governments, New Mexico will be even more badly hurt by this first wave of converging crises than it is today, and its economic and social recovery will be slower and more partial than is necessary. Really bold investments -- unprecedented investments -- are needed for our society and environment if we want to grow relevant careers, skills, and spirit in this state. A lot of economic activity, a lot of livelihoods, are being trimmed away. New livelihoods appropriate to the situation are needed, with wartime urgency.

Meanwhile compromises reached during the first Clinton administration, and others since, have made this state an ever-growing hub of nuclear weapons activity, with nuclear waste never far behind. Besides nuclear weapons -- obsolete for this role since the early 1960s -- other global control technologies appear headed our way ([article](#), explanatory [video](#)).

Descartes Labs, a LANL spinoff that is the darling of many liberals in Santa Fe, is [much the same](#), thrilled to be getting a \$2.2 million contract to improve target acquisition for the military. (As they say, "[the first step in closing a kill chain is finding something to kill](#).") With the ink on its new contract barely dry, Descartes is currently [seeking](#) an emergency \$750,000 interest-free loan from the state, via the City of Santa Fe. It has already been given some \$1,097,000 in state grants and \$100,000 in City funds, and will get a \$260,000 bonus grant if growth meets expectations.

As you have often heard from us, LANL itself is poised to grow beyond all prior limits as it becomes a plutonium warhead core ("pit") production site. Each LANL pit will cost \$40-60 million ([slide 29](#)). By way of comparison, the smaller number is what Los Alamos County will spend on K-12 instruction this year.

Such are our priorities. They are why this state is poor.

We need to talk about community resilience. We need our local governments to show themselves and do something -- in the open, for a change.

Up in Los Alamos, our Stepford-like "company county," pit production is forcing awkward choices on the community -- growing pains as it were, with no good place to grow. While many support expansion at any cost, not everyone does.

**It would be very helpful if the Los Alamos County Council heard from the rest of northern New Mexico: we don't want your ugly, selfish**

growth, or your weapons of mass destruction, or your increased pollution, and we don't like the way LANL puts its thumb on national policy whenever possible -- and believe me, they are masters at this, with plenty of help from our congressional delegation -- to create a new Cold War to justify its own growth.

A few stalwart souls have been showing up at local virtual meetings to carry this vital message. Please join them!

The other communities in New Mexico need to impress upon the largely (but not completely) docile people of Los Alamos that if they want to keep their relations with the rest of New Mexico sweet, they cannot passively stand by while the lab's cancerous growth puts its stamp, or its boot, on the social and economic development of New Mexico.

As it happens, there is an opportunity to do just that, tomorrow.

- **Tuesday, Nov. 17**
  - **Los Alamos County Council Regular Session:** 6pm – 10pm, [agenda](#)
    - Public comment is item #4, 6:00 pm
    - Kelly Beierschmitt, Deputy Director, Operations, LANL will present at item #6C, near the beginning of the meeting
    - [Zoom link](#)
    - Meeting ID: 991 7448 9915

And there is also this one, another opportunity to speak for a green new deal, not an ever-browner dead end.

- **Wednesday, Nov. 18**
  - **Village of Jemez Springs Council:** 6pm – 8pm, [agenda & web coordinates](#), [here](#) (pdf).

To review, here are possible themes and talking points:

- Ask for a resolution against pit production at LANL (our draft from earlier this year is now passe; the wider "we" can update and build on prior successful resolutions [here](#));
- Oppose membership in the corrupt [Regional Coalition of LANL Communities](#) (RCLC) Counties and cities in Northern New Mexico are part of this coalition;
- Demand transparency regarding LANL's \$14 billion plutonium pit plan ([slide 29](#) again);
- Support for emergency responses to our cascading, simultaneous crises of environmental, economy, and society;
- Request public officials consider the true costs of nuclear weapons and pit production; and so on. You get the idea.

Please continue to write [letters to editors](#) and if you can, opinion pieces. These are very important, affecting news decisions as well as public and leadership opinions.

**We hope you will endorse the [Call for Sanity, Not Nuclear Production](#) and ask others to do so as well.**

**We seldom ask for donations but this is now the season when it is important to do so. Please [contribute!](#)**

We hope that if you have a special connection with an elected official, use it now. For most people, however, writing private missives to elected officials, especially to ones with large constituencies, is an exercise in futility. It may even be counterproductive, as it shows a degree of naivete that can safely be ignored.

In solidarity,

Greg, Trish, Lydia



# Los Alamos Study Group



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November 9, 2020

## The election; Upcoming local government meetings -- please virtually attend!

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### Dear New Mexico activist leaders --

Well, finally the voting is (mostly) over (except in Georgia, which awaits a runoff). Counting, proclaiming, and litigating continue, so the spectacle goes on.

Since Trump was elected, many of us have seen him more as a symptom than a cause of the country's problems. One advisor aptly likened the election of Trump to ripping off a band-aid and seeing the wound. Thomas Frank was among many who cogently [analyzed](#) what went wrong and how to [fix](#) it. A [recent](#) Chris Hedges jeremiad is insightful if harsh.

Today Glenn Greenwald, after [concluding](#) (correctly in our view) that nothing Trump has done remotely compares to the damage done by the Bush-Cheney administration, offers this insight as we all move forward in this crepuscular period:

It is not an exaggeration to say that much of the division on the center-left over the past four years has been shaped by whether one sees Trump as a symptom of American pathologies or as its primary cause, of whether one views the return of pre-Trump "normalcy" as something to loathe or something to crave, of whether one views the Bush/Cheney years and War on Terror abuses (to say nothing of the horrors of the Cold War) as at least as bad as anything Trump has ushered in or whether one sees those pre-Trump evils as somehow more benign and less ignoble.

What now?

First a reality check. The Joe Biden-Kamala Harris team, should their election be confirmed, is and will be very hawkish, as many observers have noted (random recent selection: [Moon of Alabama](#), Caitlin Johnstone [here](#) and [here](#), Aaron Mehta at [Defense News](#)). Joe Biden pretty much "IS the swamp," as Ilargi [notes](#). The present vastly-increased power of three-letter agencies is not at all something in which to rejoice, and it is difficult to see how that power can be lessened.

Jonathan Cook [writes](#) of the terrific risk of falling asleep:

The globe-spanning U.S. empire faces the rapid emergence of all these threats on a planetary scale. Its endless wars against phantom enemies have left the U.S. burdened with astounding debt. Its technologies, from nuclear weapons to AI, mean there can be no possible escape from a major miscalculation. And the U.S. empire's insatiable greed and determination to colonise every last inch of the planet, if only with our waste products, is gradually killing the life-systems we depend on.

If Biden becomes president, his victory will be a temporary win for torpor, for complacency. But a new Trump will emerge soon enough to potentise – and misdirect – the fury steadily building beneath the surface. If we let it, the pendulum will swing back and forth, between ineffectual lethargy and ineffectual rage, until it is too late. Unless we actively fight back, the stagnation will suffocate us all.

What looks like torpor from 40,000 feet might be seen as a process of successive political a) *distractions* and b) *abstractions* down here on the ground. It is very easy to be effectively tranquilized by trivia, which play the same political role as feints do in sports -- or more seriously, in war. There are plenty of red herrings on the menu.

*Abstractions* are just as enticing. Oh yes, we're all against (pick a favorite "ism" to attack, red or blue, or some grand and distant goal). We can all talk about these "until," as is said, "the cows come home."

Meanwhile, serious adversaries concretely advance their plans. ("Adversaries," not "enemies," please note. Most of them are fine people and some

carry truths we do not yet see. They may yet be helpful.)

There are important local government meetings this week, starting in Taos today. See [this public calendar with links to agendas and for how to take part](#).

As we have previously [explained](#), we want as many people as possible to attend these meetings and participate in the public comment portions. See below for what we believe will be unifying themes and talking points.

These are:

- **Monday, Nov. 9**
  - **Taos, Town Council: 4pm – 6pm. For more information go to: <https://www.taosgov.com>; agendas are listed at: <https://www.taosgov.com/478/Agendas-Minutes>; agendas are posted 72-hours prior to meeting**
- **Tuesday, Nov. 10**
  - **Santa Fe, County Commission: 2pm – 3pm**
  - **Santa Fe, City Council: 6pm – 10pm**
  - **Los Alamos, County Council: 6pm – 10pm**
  - **Angel Fire, Village Council: 5:30pm – 7:30pm**
  - **Questa, Village Council: 6pm – 8pm**
- Regarding these meetings, our Outreach Director Lydia Clark, notes:
  - In most instances, participating by Zoom (or other web-based program) is required or submitting written commentary prior to the meeting.
  - Possible themes and talking points:
    - Ask for a resolution against pit production at LANL (our draft from earlier this year is now passe; the wider "we" can update and build on prior successful resolutions [here](#));
    - Oppose membership in the corrupt [Regional Coalition of LANL Communities](#) (RCLC) Counties and cities in Northern New Mexico are part of this coalition;
    - Demand transparency regarding LANL's \$14 billion plutonium pit plan ([slide 29](#));
    - Support for emergency responses to our cascading, simultaneous crises of environmental, economy, and society;
    - Request public officials consider the true costs of nuclear weapons and pit production; and
    - Request public hearings with opportunities to question LANL representatives.
- Santa Fe has been engaged in development which includes the possibility of LANL having a presence in or near the City of Santa Fe - under the guise of an "office" not associated with the nuclear mission (the Midtown project - which is on the agenda for the 11/10/20 meeting - and other potential locations). LANL is a nuclear weapons laboratory, first and foremost, and any new campus or facility will primarily serve that purpose. Their primary new mission is plutonium pit production, and much that they are doing is focused on expansion of the workforce for this mission. This includes recruitment of our youth, expanding into our communities (they need housing), and promoting technology/jobs related to this mission - pit production jobs, as well as jobs in construction/infrastructure. The recruitment of our youth is now being targeted beginning as early as kindergarten through high school, and into our colleges and universities. It also means increase in resource use - water, land, and utilities. Where will all of this come from?
- We must speak up, publicly, to stop this kind of expansion, and instead promote work benefiting our communities. Nuclear weapons benefit no one. We want to offer positive alternatives to a nuclear colony. Be creative - speak from your heart and encourage others to participate in these meetings as well. As Hannah Arendt stated, "public political purpose is **POWER**. . . collective engagement. . . not coercion, but consent and rational persuasion." We can change and create the future we want and need for all humanity.

Please continue to write [letters to editors](#) and if you can, opinion pieces. These are very important, affecting news decisions as well as public and leadership opinions. [Here](#) is an excellent recent example from Suzie Schwartz and Jean Nichols, which received national distribution today.

We hope you will endorse the [Call for Sanity, Not Nuclear Production](#) and ask others to do so as well.

We seldom ask for donations but this is now the season when it is important to do so. Please [contribute!](#)

We hope that if you have a special connection with an elected official, that you will talk to them. For most people however, writing private missives to elected officials, especially to ones with large constituencies, is an exercise in futility. It may even be counterproductive, as it shows a degree of naivete that can safely be ignored.

Stay safe, help each other,

Greg, Trish, Lydia



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October 28, 2020

## Upcoming local government meetings, background as to why these are important, report on our citizens hearing at the Capitol

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Please endorse the [Call for Sanity not Nuclear Production!](#)

Previous letter, 10/6/20: [Citizens hearing tomorrow: plutonium-based security or community-based security? Will local politicians continue to support Trump's nuclear plan for Greater Santa Fe? Are you standing aside too?](#)

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[Contribute.](#) Volunteer. Contact us ([Greg.](#) [Trish in main office.](#) [Lydia Clark in Santa Fe.](#))

### Dear New Mexico activist leaders --

We are observing that many people, including political leaders and candidates, nonprofit leaders and followers, and reporters and editors, are now afraid to speak out against the largest *Power-That-Is* in New Mexico, namely the complex of Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), Sandia National Laboratories (SNL), their overseer the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), and the matrix of militarism and military institutions in which NNSA and its laboratories are embedded.

The expansion of these laboratories is being welcomed with open arms in New Mexico.

At the moment, the main glimmer of hope to forestall development of a new Rocky Flats nuclear production center ironically lies in Washington, where the enormous costs and risks of the LANL factory are apparent to at least some responsible parties.

Power which operates by fear is, to the extent it does, *coercive* power. [Thomas Merton](#) and later [James Douglass](#) called it "The Unspeakable."

Fear of the nuclear-military state was once confined to relatively narrow circles in this state but it has now spread to infect a controlling portion of New Mexico civic life and institutions.

This fear is entirely antithetical to democracy.

It does little good to point out that *New Mexico is investing (again) on the wrong side of history*, as the pending entry-into-force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) [indicates](#), so long as individuals and more so organizations and opinion leaders do not actually stand up on the *right* side of history.

If you peruse the [Call for Sanity. Not Nuclear Production](#) and look to see which organizations have *not endorsed* this call despite dozens of entreaties to do so via all conceivable means you will begin to get an idea of how effectively New Mexico's acquiescence to hosting the new Rocky Flats has been engineered.

We see no countervailing force in New Mexico political life. New Mexico progressives, for example, are by-and-large just ordinary liberal Democrats first and foremost. In general, they have allowed what antiwar and anti-militaristic perspectives they might have had to be crushed beneath the general tide of electoralism. Democratic politicians take them for granted, and why shouldn't they?

It is ironic that in hawkish South Carolina, the Democratic candidate for the 2nd congressional district, which includes the Savannah River Site (SRS), which like LANL is also slated to host a plutonium warhead core ("pit") factory, is now [questioning](#) pit production. That has certainly not happened here!

If we turn our eyes to the broader question of New Mexico's "failure-to-thrive" and look into the future, we see that environmental, economic, and social decline are largely "baked-in" by the failure of most New Mexico political and nonprofit leaders -- including us, too much of the time -- to even offer any realistic vision otherwise. (To be fair to ourselves, we again and again sounded the warning, and offered the general direction we need to go, in dozens of public meetings, op eds, and policy missives and letters over the past two decades. The response has been crickets.)

It is not that democracy was *taken from us* over our strenuous objections. It's more that we got confused about what it was, and we *just let it go*. We didn't resist.

Getting a measure of democracy back will be hard, especially in a pandemic -- or at least it will be for now, when belief in a return to normal times and the efficacy of the current election system remain high. Most people who should understand, do not understand what they have lost and are losing.

### **What, then, can be done?**

We aren't sure. We do see local government as essential elements, if not the upward-welling source, of resistance to further conquest, and of democratic reconstruction.

We hope you will continue to write [letters to editors](#) and if you can, opinion pieces. These are very important, affecting news decisions as well as public and leadership opinions.

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We hope that if you have a special connection with an elected official, that you will talk to them. For most people however, writing private missives to elected officials, especially to ones with large constituencies, is an exercise in futility. It may even be counterproductive, as it shows a degree of naivete that can safely be ignored.

The alternative to a nonpublic "begging letter" is to publicly call out a politician -- members of our congressional delegation especially. Our congressional delegation knows no shame in their support of genocidal weapons of mass destruction, as well as their neglect of any meaningful response, or even discussion of how to respond, to our climate crisis. To prevent the continuation of such deadly behavior, the guilty need to be shamed in the court of public opinion. Senator Udall's committee in Congress has yet to speak on the subject of this year's funding for NNSA and pit production. People have begged him to do the right thing for years. Something far harsher is merited now. He has one last chance and it's evaporating quickly.

We also want you to virtually attend local government meetings, and speak whenever possible --

- in favor of a resolution against pit production at LANL (our draft from earlier this year is now passe; the wider "we" can update and build on prior successful resolutions [here](#));
- against membership in the corrupt [Regional Coalition of LANL Communities](#) (RCLC) where appropriate;
- demanding transparency regarding LANL's \$14 billion plutonium pit plan (see below); and
- in favor of emergency responses to our cascading, simultaneous crises of environmental, economy, and society, which you and your friends and colleagues will help devise (!), hopefully with participation from the other side of the aisle.

To this end we have put together a public [calendar of local government meetings](#). (If you are aware of ones we have omitted please write Lydia or Trish.)

### **There is an important meeting TODAY in Santa Fe:**

#### **SF City Council Governing Body Mtg**

Wednesday, October 28 6:00 – 10:00pm

Description: Link for on line meeting: <https://www.youtube.com/user/cityofsantafe>

Written comments must be submitted by 1:00 p.m. 10/28/20 to: <https://santafe.primegov.com/public/portal>

Please go to: <https://santafe.primegov.com/public/portal> to download agenda.

Public comment is usually at the beginning of the meeting.

### **There are other important meetings on November 10:**

#### **SF County Commission Mtg**

Tuesday, November 10, 2:00 – 3:00pm

Description: Members of the public can listen and participate in the meeting via Webex. To participate byphone, call 1-408-418-9388, using meeting number (access code) 961 151 996 and password 7PDm4yvJuH3.

To participate via the internet, go to: <https://sfco.webex.com/sfco/j.php?MTID=m2c6c019cce7b77d01e9ac56eeb5b131f>.

In addition, people may watch the meeting at: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCKGV2GEBC1Qv38Ph61083xg> and <https://www.facebook.com/Santa-Fe-County-Board-of-County-Commissioners101109334955454/>

To access agenda go to [santafecountynm.gov](http://santafecountynm.gov) and scroll to county calendar and click on the board meeting agenda.

## Los Alamos County Council Reg Session (NNSA will be present and presenting)

Tuesday, November 10, 6:00 – 10:00pm

Description: Members of the public interested in watching the meeting can view the agenda and live stream the meeting using this link below and accessing the meeting for the respective date listed above: <http://losalamos.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>

Members of the public wishing to attend may participate and provide public comment via Zoom, by linking to the following URL address, or by calling the conference call lines listed below:

Join Zoom Webinar: <https://zoom.us/j/> (link to be furnished on the agenda page 72 hrs before meeting).

Webinar ID: To be furnished 72 hours before meeting on the agenda page.

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## **Background: two futures**

I want to set two contrasting New Mexico futures before you, to make visible what is largely hidden behind countless distractions and to simplify a complex situation. We will be speaking primarily of northern New Mexico but the scale and nature of the choice being made for *El Norte* affects all of New Mexico.

*Who* is making the choice between these futures is another pertinent question. At present there is no democratic process involved, only administration. The fate of northern NM is being decided in Washington, DC by a few people whose primary concerns are not the people of this state.

One future is being built around a massive program to make more nuclear weapons, requiring great national and local commitment and cultural identification. We here talk about it all the time. It's the future we don't want.

The alternative is what we *do* want and *must have*, just to survive. It is a terrible mistake to imagine that any kind of livable future is assured. Even to survive we will be dramatically changing our attitudes and ways of life. So don't think radical change is impossible. It's begun.

In gross outline -- your own ideas may differ in detail but the overall outline is probably similar -- we need to build household and community resilience, with an inclusive social contract and productive roles for everybody. We need food, water, housing, and energy security for everybody. We need emergency employment and training in much-needed fields to replace jobs we are losing and won't get back. We need deep adaptation to a rapidly-changing climate, and to lead in mitigating the climate disaster we are brewing. We need to be able to live with less energy, while building locally-owned and managed renewable energy.

What's different now, vs. a year or a decade ago, is that *the crisis is now upon us*.

These two futures are both built around government programs, in one way or another -- the one exclusively federal, the other involving a mix of local, state, and federal policies and programs, which in turn foster a large ecosystem of accessible, locally-owned private enterprise.

The scale, cost, and profoundly different politics of these two futures make them mutually incompatible. We are not going to be able to preserve nuclear weapons and a global Empire, *and also* prevent global climate collapse. We have to choose.

The decision between these two futures is usually considered a national matter. That perspective assumes New Mexico is a colony and that we and our political "leaders" will do what we are told with respect to most of all the important decisions about our future. When push comes to shove (as it does in Washington), New Mexico is a peripheral zone needed as a nuclear weapons and waste colony, a military testing and training area, and as a source of oil, gas and wind, and for very little else. Investing -- psychologically and politically -- in nuclear weapons, waste, and the military have made us among the poorest states.

If we don't use our voice this choice will be made for us. It is being made now.

## **Future #1 (the default): what we don't want, in simple terms**

As you know, the U.S. has embarked on a project to upgrade or replace all U.S. nuclear weapons, warheads, and the factories that build them. Leaving aside all the other problems this causes, the sheer cost of this program, including environmental cleanup, in fiscal year (FY) 2021 is \$51.2 billion, greater than the total military expenditures of all but four countries ([p. 8](#)).

This is a staggering sum, but it pales in comparison to the \$2 *trillion* that is to be spent over the next 30 years on nuclear weapons and associated cleanup, assuming current programs continue. This is more than \$15,000 per U.S. household ([p. 9](#)).

Yet nuclear weapons comprise only roughly 5% (depending on how you count) of U.S. military spending overall, which now [approaches \\$1 trillion annually](#), exclusive of interest payments on what has been borrowed.

This exceeds the combined military spending of all other countries in the world except three (China, Russia, and India; [p. 1](#)). That's \$7,240 per year per U.S. household. Military spending absorbs the majority of what Congress appropriates each year. (Frank Zappa: "Politics is the entertainment division of the military industrial complex.")

One "small" but must-have item in the Global Hegemon's shopping list is an emergency supply of new plutonium warhead cores ("pits"). They are needed by the end of this decade for making a new kind of ICBM warhead with some advanced features (the "W87-1") to go on a new missile. To meet an [artificial production deadline of 2030](#), a pit factory is needed *right now*, on such short notice that the only place available is an old, unsafe, smallish, R&D facility ("PF-4") at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) which must also continue other missions, which -- as you might have noticed -- is located in Greater Santa Fe.

To install such a factory in and around this facility, it is necessary to harness skilled labor and housing across the entire region and beyond (see last year's [animated regional site plan](#), recently obtained via the Freedom of Information Act [FOIA]), opening one or more [new campuses](#), etc.

Some 4,000 full-time workers ([slide 29](#)) will be required to run the inadequate LANL facilities around the clock, making the whole project insanely expensive.

It is clear from LANL [presentations](#) that the northern NM labor market and contractor pool are inadequate for LANL's needs. The whole purpose of drawing some [700 contractor representatives from 35 states](#) 14 months ago was to break away from northern New Mexico's businesses and labor limitations.

Building, starting up, and running the LANL pit factory through 2030 will cost roughly \$14 billion (B)([slides 23, 26, 27, 29](#)). Each pit made will cost something like \$50 million ([slides 29-31](#)), which for comparison is about what New Mexico pays annually for public school education for each 5,000 students.

The life cycle cost of the entire ICBM program (called the "Ground-Based Strategic Deterrent," GBSD) will be in the range of [one-quarter trillion dollars](#). Most Americans [don't want ICBMs](#). Some former nuclear commanders say they make us less safe, not more. We think so too.

**This, in a nutshell, is the big economic and social development engine that has been selected for northern New Mexico by our congressional delegation and the Pentagon. The Governor and Legislature are passively -- actively, in some cases -- accepting this path also. There is no other vision on the table.**

Choosing this path will make any green, socially-responsible vision impossible to realize -- politically, culturally, educationally, environmentally.

It is a path of no return.

### **Future #2: what we do want, and need**

We are in the midst of a pandemic that has already caused more than [300,000 excess deaths](#) in the U.S. and is [well on the way](#) to exceeding total U.S. deaths in World War II ([419,400](#)). Currently the pandemic is getting worse fast, including in New Mexico. K-12 education has been badly hurt by the pandemic, especially for lower-income and rural students, as have our colleges and universities. As the pandemic hit economies already weakened by obscene inequalities, financial predation, corruption, and inadequate price signals as a result of central bank interventions, a deep recession was triggered worldwide and in the U.S. This has lowered demand for oil and led, in New Mexico, to a precipitous decline in oil and gas revenues and a fiscal crisis. Unemployment and bankruptcies -- personal and business -- have skyrocketed everywhere, with no end in sight. Homelessness is rising in this state and elsewhere. Mental health is deteriorating and suicide risk -- especially in youth -- is rising. Many businesses will never re-open, and many of the newly-unemployed will never go back to the work they did before the pandemic. Tourism, a central pillar of the New Mexico economy, is being hit especially hard. New Mexico is already at or near the very bottom of all U.S. states in most important social and economic metrics, making our state the [worst of all](#) in child well-being. There is no guarantee that any of this will get better. Indeed, with an economy largely driven by consumption, further dominoes are certain to fall. The bottom might be quite far down.

On top of this we face the ongoing collapse of a livable climate. In New Mexico, water supplies are declining, along with the health of our forests and grasslands and the animals that live in them.

We thus face a combined environmental, economic, and social emergency that is unraveling the fabric of our society and of all nature. Survival of our civilization and indeed of most higher life forms is in question, even without considering the possibility of nuclear war -- the one thing we are preparing for!

**So what exactly is being done at the state and local levels, where democracy is comparatively strong, in response? The short answer is:**



**very little.** As Study Group Outreach Director Lydia Clark has emphasized, **in New Mexico, governments are largely not even showing up.**

In the midst of the greatest crisis in the history of New Mexico, exceeding in overall severity even the 1918 flu if our environmental problems are included, **do you see the state legislature in session? We don't.**

Or to take a local government example, in our tourism-dependent capitol city, currently reeling from the pandemic and associated fiscal crisis, **there are exactly four (4) City Council meetings scheduled for the entire remainder of the year, counting today's. This, during one of the worst crises ever to befall the City.**

#### **What can be done? A LOT.**

Collectively, we are not using our imaginations, or holding our leaders accountable. We have been captivated by neoliberal economic thought. We are colonized. We see dollar signs when we should be seeing precious human beings -- and animals, living ecosystems, and the tapestry of human effort in the landscape that has produced and maintained our unique inheritance.

New Mexico holds more than \$20 billion in its permanent funds and still has an excellent bond rating. We have sun and wind. We have our people. A great deal can be done. What would you do?

#### **Report on our citizens hearing at the Capitol:**

First, we had a decent turnout and some excellent testimony at our citizens hearing on 10/7/20 outside the Roundhouse on the issues involved in the proposed massive expansion of Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) and its new plutonium warhead core ("pit") production mission.

As promised, we sent the testimony, in video form, to our congressional delegation, state officials, and cognizant federal officials at the Department of Energy (DOE) and its nuclear weapons subsidiary the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA).

You can see a 6 minute highlights version here. (Hat tip to Lydia Clark, our outreach director, who did the filming and editing.)

We all know -- or at least I hope we all know -- that these various government parties will pay no attention to what was said except, in some cases, to gauge the strength of local opposition and in others, as input in their deliberations as to how they can frustrate that opposition.

The point of the event was not to beg but rather to begin to organize ourselves to do at least part of what the federal government is not doing. There is no alternative.

Stay safe, help each other,

Greg, Trish, Lydia



# Los Alamos Study Group

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October 6, 2020

## **Citizens hearing tomorrow: plutonium-based security or community-based security? Will local politicians continue to support Trump's nuclear plan for Greater Santa Fe? Are you standing aside too?**

[Permalink](#) for this letter. Please forward as desired. Prior [letters](#) to this list.

Please endorse the [Call for Sanity not Nuclear Production](#)

Previous letter, 10/2/20: [Reminder: Citizens hearing on building a plutonium weapons factory at LANL and alternatives for the region and state: October 7, State Capitol, 1-6 pm](#)

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### **Dear New Mexico activist leaders –**

In case you missed previous announcements (most recently [here](#)), **there will be a citizens hearing tomorrow, Wednesday, October 7, from 1 to 6 pm on the east side of New Mexico State Capitol to take testimony on some of the environmental, social, and economic questions surrounding the federal decision to build a replacement for the shuttered Rocky Flats nuclear weapons plant within the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL).**

This will be an outdoor, socially-distanced, masked, and very covid-safe event -- much safer than say, going to a retail store.

Your questions and concerns will be recorded and delivered to our congressional delegation, the Governor, and the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA). We hope some of these officials will attend, but we haven't gotten any response from them to our requests thus far.

Despite the change of mission and dramatic expansion planned, NNSA has [decided](#) to not undertake a new Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement (SWEIS) for LANL. Our congressional delegation and Governor, by their thundering silence, approve of this slap in the State's face.

Nuclear weapons production has continued during the pandemic. Despite our best efforts, nuclear weapons workers were deemed "essential workers." They are "persevering through the pandemic," as a [challenge coin](#) from one plant puts it. No production milestones are being missed, no sirree!

So what about you and we, who are working to prevent climate collapse and nuclear war? Are we all "essential workers" also?

Let's hope so, and act accordingly!

Yes, we know that coming to an in-person event, however safe, is inconvenient or worse. That inconvenience is the whole point of showing up. If action were effortless, nobody would pay the slightest attention to it. Moral force, other factors being equal, is proportional to personal sacrifice.

**This is an important event. We may not get another chance as good as this one to demonstrate opposition to building and operating a "Rocky Flats South" in Greater Santa Fe.**

There is simply such a thing as too late, as Martin Luther King said. If pit production gets well and truly established at LANL, **it will be very hard for this region to ever recover.** It is a dead-end road and we are on it.

So what are the alternatives? Because we need some and we need them fast -- this year, not just next year. Economic dominoes are falling right now, many of them permanently. What are we building up to take the place of the jobs that will never come back? In this *annus horribilis*, our legislature has managed to meet for a total of something like 33 days. What is New Mexico's recovery plan? Our community resilience plan? Our household economic security plan? What essential careers are we making accessible for our young people? What essential roles are we offering healthy seniors? Because yes, we do need their help. We just don't realize it yet.

But hey, we do have a \$14 billion plan to make about 233 additional nuclear weapons ([slide 29](#)), and LANL has several training programs to turn bright-eyed young people into plutonium minions. So glad we have our priorities straight.

Tomorrow, it doesn't matter if you have answers, questions, or simply a *cri du coeur*. What matters is that you come and speak your mind and heart.

***If you haven't done so already, please do contact your friends and ask them to come. This is your event.***

See you tomorrow,

Greg, Trish, Lydia

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October 2, 2020

## Reminder: Citizens hearing on building a plutonium weapons factory at LANL and alternatives for the region and state: October 7, State Capitol, 1-6 pm

[Permalink](#) for this letter. Please forward as desired. Prior [letters](#) to this list.

Please endorse the [Call for Sanity not Nuclear Production](#)

Previous letter, 9/21/20: [Citizens Hearing on the Environmental, Social, and Economic Impacts of Plutonium Pit Production and Its Alternatives: October 7, State Capitol, 1-6 pm](#)

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Our blog (little used at present but this may change): [Remember your Humanity](#). [Twitter](#).

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### **What: Citizens Hearing on the Environmental, Social, and Economic Impacts of Plutonium Pit Production and Its Alternatives**

**\*This will be an outdoor, socially-distanced, masked, covid-safe event.\***

**When: Wednesday, October 7, 1 to 6 pm**

**Where: [New Mexico State Capitol](#), East Side**

**Who: Elected and appointed officials (invited), concerned people like you and I**

**Why: There is no opportunity for public discussion, nor is any analysis planned, of the local, regional, statewide, or national impacts of the huge proposed LANL expansion, and LANL's new industrial plutonium mission(s)**

### **Dear New Mexico activist leaders –**

First, a very sincere "thank you" to [all](#) who have endorsed the [Call for Sanity, Not Nuclear Production!](#) **If you haven't, please do! If you have, please talk and write to your friends and ask them to endorse as well!**

Overall, there is little opposition so far to against building a nuclear weapons factory in Los Alamos. Many people and organizations are afraid to speak up in this simplest of ways, for one reason or another. Fear is contagious, but so is courage.

Lawmakers and national organizations assume New Mexico wants this factory because of this silence and because our congressional delegation has worked to get it.

The Los Alamos bomb factory does not require big new nuclear buildings, at least at first. (It would, soon enough.) So far, nuclear construction to create the new factory complex has been largely confined to interior spaces. It is all rather incremental and undramatic -- so far.

I say this because many people ask whether construction has already started. It has, but not in the major ways that are planned. The transformation of Los Alamos National Laboratory has begun but it is not far advanced.

The point is, it can be stopped, as it has been before.

What is dramatic is the budget: **about \$14 billion** to build, equip, hire staff, and start running this "little" factory over the 2019 through 2030 period. (For this and more see slide 29 [here](#).)

As you can see at the link this leads to a cost of roughly \$60 million for each of roughly 233 plutonium warhead cores ("pits") to be made over this period.

Whether this factory can get going is the main hurdle right now in what has just been revealed to be a [\\$111\\* billion program](#) to rebuild the U.S. ICBM fleet. (\*LANL's high costs -- which by the way we were able to brief to a number of individuals in Congress, NNSA, and the White House yesterday on Zoom -- would more than double the cost of the warheads for this missile. This cost revelation is not included in the \$111 billion.)

Maintaining the new missiles over their lifetime would add another \$167 billion, pushing the "lifetime" cost of the new doomsday missiles to somewhere north of a quarter-trillion dollars. ("Lifetime" is a poor word here. "Deathtime" is closer.)

Thus the cost of one pit from the new factory which so many applaud (and so many, many more do their best to ignore) is *more than 100 times* what a roughly 3 kg pit would weigh in solid gold.

This cost is enough to hire 1,000 entry-level teachers and assistants for a year, or 1,000 carpenters and roofers at a living wage for a year, to make our homes more efficient and slash our energy usage.

It's enough to build thousands of residential solar systems. The \$14 billion to start and run this factory through 2030 is enough for a million residential solar installations.

These are just the financial costs. What will be the costs in terms of despair among our youth? In terms of environmental desolation? What about the traffic? Where will all the new plutonium workers live?

What about the water?

Last year, only 4% (50 drums) of the nuclear waste shipped to WIPP from LANL was old "legacy" waste. The nuclear weapons program shipped 1,200 drums' worth -- 96%. *And that is before pit production even gets started.*

The U.S., and more so this state, face a continuing wave of bankruptcies, in addition to the national governance and electoral crises that mesmerize so many. We are facing the collapse of our climate, our economy, and our society.

So is building more nuclear weapons the best priority for this country right now?

*These new pits from LANL are NOT for making existing warheads safer.* That's what so many hypnotized souls in Washington are telling themselves these days. *That "safety" goal could be accomplished with the hundreds of spare warheads -- very modern warheads, built at the very end of the Cold War and tailor-made for ICBMs -- that the US has in storage right now, and by requiring safer handling procedures.*

The main difference between such an excellent common-sense plan and the monstrosity now underway is that 540 ICBM warheads (for 400 deployed missiles) are not deemed *enough*. The nutjobs who make policy want to have the option of putting three warheads on every missile if tensions with Russia rise high enough. This, they imagine, will frighten Russia by its very madness. ***It's for this that the Los Alamos pit factory is being built -- not so much safer nuclear weapons (an oxymoron, we know) to put on hair-trigger alert (as ICBM weapons always are), as the ability to threaten with MORE such weapons.***

That, and to bring billions of dollars into the NNSA warhead complex, lest schools and solar installations and job training get that money instead. Can't have that.

I am sure you understand that only ONE of these pits is needed to incinerate a whole city.

I think you also understand that a small fraction of the U.S. and Russian arsenals is enough to [wipe out most higher life forms](#) on the planet. With present U.S. priorities we won't need a nuclear war to do that of course. Climate collapse will do that.

What are YOUR questions about all this? Are you down with these "excellent" priorities for the U.S. of A.?

If you aren't, what are you doing about it?

**Please help us bring more people on October 7. You know how to do this. We really need your help. We have plenty of room to spread out so don't be shy -- but do wear a mask.**

**We will record your questions and concerns and deliver them to our congressional delegation, the Governor, and other decisionmakers. We will invite them to come but it definitely wouldn't hurt if you did so as well.**

We are looking forward to seeing you, many of whom we have not seen for months!

Very best wishes to all,

Greg, Trish, and Lydia for the Los Alamos Study Group



# Los Alamos Study Group

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September 21, 2020

## **Citizens Hearing on the Environmental, Social, and Economic Impacts of Plutonium Pit Production and Its Alternatives: October 7, State Capitol, 1-6 pm**

[Permalink](#) for this letter. Please forward as desired. Prior [letters](#) to this list.

Please endorse the [Call for Sanity not Nuclear Production](#)

Previous letter, 08/18/20: [Zoominar this Thursday 4 pm: big increase in pit money coming: news & views](#)

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### **What: Citizens Hearing on the Environmental, Social, and Economic Impacts of Plutonium Pit Production and Its Alternatives**

**\*This will be an outdoor, socially-distanced, masked, covid-safe event.\***

**When: Wednesday, October 7, 1 to 6 pm**

**Where: [New Mexico State Capitol](#), East Side**

**Who: Elected and appointed officials (invited), concerned people like you and I**

**Why: There is no opportunity for public discussion, nor is any analysis planned, of the local, regional, statewide, or national impacts of the huge proposed LANL expansion, and LANL's new industrial plutonium mission(s)**

### **Dear New Mexico activist leaders –**

First, a very sincere "thank you" to all who have endorsed the [Call for Sanity. Not Nuclear Production!](#) **If you haven't, please do!**

We've been awfully busy here but we haven't kept in touch very well with all but a few co-conspirators. It's time to fix that.

We last wrote on the first of the month, when DOE released its [Final Supplement Analysis for the 2008 LANL Site Wide EIS](#). Our press notification: ["DOE concludes no EIS needed for vast expansion of Los Alamos nuclear missions, including plutonium bomb core factory -- altogether, the largest project in the history of New Mexico."](#)

This resulted in a fair bit of press locally (e.g. ["Feds close door on new LANL environmental study," Santa Fe New Mexican](#)) and, via the Associated Press, nationally (e.g. ["US Officials: No New Environmental Study for Nuclear Lab, NYT](#)).

The next day, the Department of Energy (DOE) issued two Amended Records of Decision ([here](#) and [here](#)), which together cement its choice to create a plutonium warhead core ("pit") factory at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL).

Far from being over, the fight is just beginning. Last week we sent invitations to over 100 congressional staff members to a government-only workshop on pit production, which we are organizing later this week in conjunction with Princeton University.

On the 9th, we [presented](#) to the legislature's Radioactive & Hazardous Materials Committee (slide deck at the link with some new information) and on the 14th to an active Democratic Party group (Indivisible Nob Hill). This latter talk began with a plea for patience with those on the other side of the aisle, whose cooperation is needed to get anything useful done. From Thomas Frank's *"The People, No:"*

(Lawrence) Goodwyn also warned against a politics of "individual righteousness," a tendency toward "celebrating the purity" of one's so-called radicalism. If you wish to democratize the country's economic structure, he argued, you must practice "ideological patience," a suspension of moral judgment of ordinary Americans. Only then can you start to build a movement that is hopeful and powerful and that changes society forever.

If you're not interested in democratizing the country's economic structure, however, individual righteousness might be just the thing for you. This model deals with ordinary citizens by judging and purging; by canceling and scolding. It's not about building; it's about purity, about stainless moral virtue. Its favorite math is subtraction; its most cherished rhetorical form is denunciation; its goal is to bring the corps of the righteous into a tight orbit around the most righteous one of all.

What swept over huge parts of American liberalism after the disaster of November 8, 2016, was the opposite of Goodwyn's "ideological patience." It was a paroxysm of scolding, a furor for informing Trump voters what inadequate and indeed rotten people

they were. The elitist trend that had been building among liberals for decades hurried to its loud, carping consummation. (pp. 228-229)

...What is certain is that the liberalism of scolding will never give rise to the kind of mass movement that this country needs. It is almost entirely a politics of individual righteousness, an angry refusal of Goodwyn's "ideological patience." Its appeal comes not from the prospect of democratizing the economy but from the psychic satisfaction of wagging a finger in some stupid proletarian's face, forever. (p. 241)

We've been laying the groundwork for resistance in other ways as well, to be brought forth later.

**The main reason for this note is the above heads-up. Mark your calendars!**

**We will record your testimony and deliver it to our congressional delegation, the Governor, and other decisionmakers. We will invite them to come but it definitely wouldn't hurt if you did so as well.**

During and especially after the event we all will be able to safely visit with some of our activist friends we haven't seen face-to-face in months.

Background information will be provided and we will be on hand to answer as many questions as we can.

DOE has tried to build a pit factory here several times. It may seem all-powerful, but the agency faces daunting challenges in that effort, some of which will be even harder to overcome than ever. DOE can be defeated, if we work together.

Very best wishes to all,

Greg, Trish, and Lydia for the Los Alamos Study Group

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# Los Alamos Study Group



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August 18, 2020

## Zoominar this Thursday 4 pm; big increase in pit money coming; news & views

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Previous letter, 08/12/20: [What you can do: zoominar moved to Thurs. 20 Aug. 4 - 6 pm MDT.](#)

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Dear New Mexico activist leaders –

### 1. This week's zoominar will be on Thursday, August 20, from 4 - 6 pm MDT

If you haven't registered you must do so in advance here:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcucOmqqj0tH9TJfzVssK0AcQdZ4rdu0hhQ>. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email.

To repeat from prior announcements this meeting will feature:

- Slides with basic information and references for newcomers;
- Plenty of time for questions with real-time answers in the chat box, supplying key references as part of the answers so you will have those references to use;
- A progress report; and
- Some strategic comments and discussion.

Come one, come all! Invite your friends!

### 2. What we think are the most important things to be done for disarmament this month in New Mexico

Please refer to the list in last week's [letter](#)!

On the surface, nothing much has changed; August is in many ways a slow month. But Congress will return in September and is very likely to authorize and appropriate more than \$1 billion *at LANL alone* for pit production construction, training, operations, and hiring for the coming fiscal year (starting October 1). While the exact sum and the language of any reports required, etc. are still to be determined, a vast increase in spending on nuclear weapons and a vast increase in spending on plutonium pit production, especially at LANL, are certain outcomes for FY21.

Unlike in past decades, New Mexico is now nearly silent about this major new mission. Among New Mexico politicians and opinion leaders there is eagerness, resignation, paralysis, and bewilderment. Unprecedented official secrecy, growing since the second Clinton Administration, fosters denial. The Democratic Party, which directly and indirectly controls most political activity in northern New Mexico, is very much in favor of building a new mid-sized substitute for the Rocky Flats Plant at Los Alamos. Moral courage -- the willingness to take an unpopular stand -- is scarce.

For these reasons we hope you ask others to join you on Thursday's call. In general, you have avenues for New Mexico outreach we do not.

I for one appreciated these words from Julian Assange, republished this morning at [The Automatic Earth](#):

"We need to keep things in perspective. The risk of inaction is extremely high. And every day you live your life you lose another day of life. That's the risk of just sitting there: you just lost a day. You just died for a day. You don't have that many; so if you're not fighting for the things you care about, and every day is disappearing, then you are losing."

### 3. News & views

- Space -- that is, not-earth -- gets a lot of attention in New Mexico. Not-earth, which mostly comes in military flavors, is considered wonderful in *whatever* flavor, "above all" as economic "development." The *Albuquerque Journal* recently ran four celestial articles (and a capstone editorial, in case we didn't get the point):



- o [Beaming solar power from space to Earth is becoming practical](#)," Aug. 9: "In the near future, solar power collected in space and beamed down to Earth could power military and civilian installations, vehicles and devices in remote places across the globe..." (Not really.)
- o [Report calls for "whole-of-government" approach](#)", Aug. 10: "As global society reaches for the stars, top U.S. military brass, government leaders and industry representatives are discussing launch of a new space commodities exchange that could facilitate trade and grow the nation's technological prowess to maintain U.S. leadership in space..."
- o [Space race redux](#)," Aug. 10: "New Mexico is front and center in a new global race to dominate space, and it's creating huge commercial opportunities for the emerging space industry here and elsewhere..." Also this gem: "The basic principle is to mine industry for innovation," Beauchemin said.
- o [New Mexico in running to land Space Command](#)," Aug. 14: "Albuquerque is one of 31 locations nationwide that the U.S. Department of Defense is now considering to set up a new headquarters for the U.S. Space Command...."
- o [Editorial: Outer space could be NM's newest economic frontier](#)," Aug. 15: "N.M. leaders have been talking about diversifying the economy for years, pushing green-energy initiatives, tourism, professional sports and larger and larger subsidies for the film industry. However, the most far-reaching opportunity may have been looming overhead all along – outer space...."

Oops, here's another just now:

- o [Hyperspace Challenge promotes 'trusted autonomy' technology in space](#), Aug. 18: "The U.S. Space Force wants satellites and spacecraft to autonomously manage problems in space, and it's seeking innovative startups to build the smart technology needed to enable space vehicles with such controls...."

Like plutonium pit production, this vision of "economic development" is based not only on the fantasy of a continuing "[American Century](#)" but also a deep alienation from nature. Much of the space "vision" is also a technological fantasy, more pathetic than powerful.

But as is the case with pit production, this vision is already profoundly harmful to New Mexico and it could get much worse. A lot of people think the main problem with pit production has to do with *physical* pollution. It doesn't. *It's mental and political pollution that are the main vehicles for social and environmental destruction.*

New Mexico has got to choose between being a military-nuclear-waste-disposal zone -- a "polygon," in Soviet usage -- and taking a real turn toward the green.

- Jean Nichols penned a useful op-ed ("[Accidents Happen: Northern New Mexico Needs A LANL Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement](#)," Jean Nichols, *Los Alamos Reporter*, Aug 12, 2020). (I should say that the figure Jean uses of 60,000 drums at Area G at the time of the Cerro Grande Fire looks a bit high to me, but I haven't had a chance to talk to Jean or otherwise check it.)
- We are aware of 6 or 8 interesting potential news stories about LANL and other sites -- some ripe and some not, some simple and some more technical. Here is one, which is all we can do today:
  - o As of July 2015 there were 1,599 LANL worker deaths for which the Department of Labor (DOL) paid death benefits ("[As U.S. ramps up nuclear production \(again\), the human toll of past work continues to mount, including at LANL](#)," Feb 5, 2020). The comparable number of Rocky Flats worker deaths through the same date is 3,909. Given that Rocky Flats was in business approximately half as long as LANL/Site Y/LASL, and employed on average let us say about half as many workers, we can say that the number of DOL-approved occupationally-related deaths per worker-year at Rocky is approximately 10 times that of LANL. This was the "heroic mode of production" (Joe Masco). We hope LANL never goes there.

Total compensation paid at LANL, including medical benefits, to the 6,546 workers who have been hurt or died as a result of working at LANL, according to DOL, is (as of 8/16/20), [\\$1.097 billion](#). At Rocky Flats, as of 8/16/20, total compensation of [\\$717 million](#) has been paid to 5,155 sick or deceased workers and their families.

Graphical representations of the growth of these benefits over time at the two sites are available ([for LANL](#), [for Rocky Flats](#)).

We will try to develop the other stories in subsequent letters, assuming the news media doesn't do so.

A very sincere "thank you" to all who have endorsed the [Call for Sanity. Not Nuclear Production!](#)

Stay safe, be encouraged.

Greg, Trish, and Lydia for the Los Alamos Study Group



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August 12, 2020

## What you can do; zoominar moved to Thurs, 20 Aug, 4 - 6 pm MDT

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Previous letter, 08/11/20: "[The tide is turning: updates: next zoominar this Thurs, 13 Aug, 4 - 6 pm MDT](#)"

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Our blog (little used at present but this may change): [Remember your Humanity](#). [Twitter](#).

[Contribute](#). Volunteer. Contact us ([Greg Trish in main office](#), [Lydia Clark in Santa Fe](#)).

Dear New Mexico activist leaders –

### 1. The next zoominar has been moved one week farther out to Thursday, August 20, from 4 - 6 pm MDT

We just did not provide enough notice for the original meeting date, and we think it best to wait a week even though an active dozen or so of you were ready to go tomorrow. Those who registered just got an email with the new date and time. **If you haven't registered you must do so in advance here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcucOmqqj0tH9TJfzVssK0AcQdZ4rdu0hhQ>**. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email.

To repeat, this meeting will feature:

- Slides with basic information and references for newcomers;
- Plenty of time for questions with real-time answers in the chat box, supplying key references as part of the answers so you will have those references to use;
- A progress report; and
- Some strategic comments and discussion.

### 2. Useful Gandhi conflict norms

Years ago we obtained via very slow mail from India what we consider to be a truly precious distillation of Gandhian conflict norms, prepared by [Johann Galtung](#). We made a handy [one-page summary](#) of his [appendix](#) on that topic. We've handed these out in paper form many times in many public settings, but not recently. Please forward these links as widely as you can. They deserve a very close reading. Even a superficial appreciation of what Gandhi understood about nonviolent social and political change is sorely needed today.

### 3. What we think are the most important things to be done for disarmament this month in New Mexico

(I left out the "nuclear" in that heading, for reasons explained in the last letter.)

Any such list will obviously change over time. And what we each can do is as unique as we are.

*Having said that, working together in harmony for specific concrete goals is necessary if we want different policies. Opinions -- yours and mine -- are otherwise powerless and forgettable, however nice they may make us feel.*

We will not win what we want by force but rather by how we have always won: through modalities of nonviolent persuasion, based in truth. There is nothing more powerful. This also has enormous practical and personal advantages for us, as it roots us in most nourishing native soil.

Here then is a short list of what we think would be most helpful right now. Our central immediate goal is the initiation of a Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement (SWEIS) process for Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) -- a policy-neutral "baby step" to be sure, but a truth-seeking, consciousness-raising, engagement-bringing step nonetheless, with a legal footprint.

The process of getting a federal commitment to a SWEIS -- what you and we are doing now -- is just as important. The resistance some of you are encountering is where the real frontier of consciousness lies -- the fenceline of the nuclear state, if you will. There is no resistance without resistance.

Please:

- Recruit endorsers to the [Call for Sanity, Not Nuclear Production](#). This is a very important small step every interested individual, business,

religious organization, and nonprofit can take. The on-line form works perfectly for most people but we still occasionally hear of difficulties. If you have trouble just call or [write](#) one of us (e.g. Lydia Clark at 505-501-2606) and we will take down your contact information.

- If your contacts have any questions or are at all interested, have them register for next week's zoominar, where they can bring forth those questions, which are probably pertinent questions for others too. Register here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcucOmqqj0tH9TJfzVssK0AcQdZ4rdu0hhQ>.
- Write letters to editors, usually 150 words maximum, asking for a SWEIS.
- Call or write local and state government, asking for a SWEIS (e.g. Maddy Hayden, NMED Public Information Officer, [maddy.hayden@state.nm.us](mailto:maddy.hayden@state.nm.us), mobile (505) 231-8800, office (505) 827-0314).
- Reach out to nonprofits you are involved with, as they will respond best to members of their group.
- Churches are good places to find people who care as well as being possible institutional endorsers of the Call. In the past, the Archdiocese and New Mexico Council of Churches have endorsed similar measures we brought forth.
- Of course donations are always welcome. This is the only thing on this list which is anonymous!
- We are always looking for possible interns and serious volunteers. We pay interns.
- To find out what is going on where nuclear weapons intersect with New Mexico, interested friends of yours need to be on this mailing list. Subscription information is at the top.
- There are more actions listed on this [action sheet](#).

Stay safe, be encouraged.

Greg, Trish, and Lydia for the Los Alamos Study Group

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[^ back to top](#)

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# Los Alamos Study Group

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August 11, 2020

## The tide is turning; updates; next zoominar this Thurs, 13 Aug, 4 - 6 pm MDT

[Permalink](#) for this letter. Please forward as desired. Prior [letters](#) to this list.

Please endorse the [Call for Sanity not Nuclear Production](#)

Previous letter, 08/03/20: "[Zoominar this coming Wednesday, 5 - 7 pm MDT: Nuclear weapons and LANL pit production: updates, discussion](#)"

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To subscribe to our main listserve (less frequent, more national and international content) [send a blank email here](#). To unsubscribe [send a blank email here](#).

Our blog (little used at present but this may change): [Remember your Humanity](#). [Twitter](#).

[Contribute](#). Volunteer. Contact us ([Greg Trish in main office](#), [Lydia Clark in Santa Fe](#)).

Dear New Mexico activist leaders –

### 1. Next zoominar this Thursday, August 13, 4 - 6 pm MDT, assuming enough people register to attend by tomorrow at 5 pm. If we have to postpone I will notify you by 5:30 pm tomorrow, Wednesday.

This meeting will feature:

- Slides with basic information and references for newcomers;
- Plenty of time for questions with real-time answers in the chat box, supplying key references as part of the answers so you will have those references to use;
- A progress report; and
- Some strategic comments and discussion.

I know it is late notice, but we have been drinking from a fire hose here and I had greater aspirations for this letter -- topics that could not be covered quickly.

(Given the absence of pertinent, useful news reporting on our issues -- something that has gradually come to pass, but which has now led us into a qualitatively different world -- I am considering a daily or semidaily news blog at [Remember Your Humanity](#). I already do most of the work for the use of our staff, board, and close advisors. But things always take longer than they ought to take. If you are potentially interested in this please write me or mention your potential interest in Thursday's zoominar.)

These zoominars have opportunity costs for all of us, but the payoff in terms of real nuclear disarmament is potentially huge.

To make them worthwhile for all concerned we need to see at least 30 registrations by Wednesday 8/12 at 5:00 pm. Since sometimes conflicts arise at the last minute, experience suggests we will need about this many registrations to bring at least 20 guests to the virtual room. Friends, 20 people is more than enough to accomplish a very great deal.

**So please register as soon as you can, assume the event is going forward unless you hear otherwise Wednesday by 5:30 pm MDT, and we will see you Thursday. Register in advance here:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcucOmqqj0tH9TJfzVssK0AcQdZ4rdu0hhQ>. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email.

Our last zoominar (Wednesday 8/5/20) was reasonably successful. In addition to Study Group staff and board we had 18 guests, including some new people. There were a lot of good questions and we covered a lot of updates on the status of nuclear weapons, Los Alamos, plutonium pit production, and related topics, which hopefully was helpful to those who attended. We did not prepare slides but focused instead on answering as best we could any and all questions attendees brought.

For those who came last time -- thank you for your investment of time. We are eager to work with you in any of several possible ways (see below) -- and *sometimes in other ways specific to your unique context, skills, contacts, and so on*. As explained Wednesday, Lydia Clark is our primary outreach coordinator (505-501-2606, in Santa Fe) but you can also reach Trish or I in our Albuquerque office (505-265-1200) or by cell (Trish 505-577-3366; Greg 505-577-8563).

### 2. Useful developments

Over the past few days there have been many interesting and useful developments bearing on the "peculiar sovereignty" that invaded this state 75 years ago.\*

\*"Peculiar sovereignty": "The Manhattan District bore no relation to the industrial or social life of our country; it was a separate state, with its own airplanes and its own factories and its thousands of secrets. It had a peculiar sovereignty that could bring about the end, peacefully or violently, of all other sovereignties." (Herbert Marks, general counsel, Atomic Energy Commission).

The tide is turning. We feel it here.

Here are some visible indications, besides those we brought up in the last letter:

- [A majority of Americans support phasing out ICBMs, modestly cutting nuclear weapons budget, and deploying low-yield sub warheads \(which has already happened\)](#) press note, Aug 10, 2020
- [NNSA Plans Big Environmental Review for 15 More Years of Livermore Operations](#), *Exchange Monitor*, Aug 7, 2020
- [Open Letter To Sen. Tom Udall: Northern New Mexico Needs A Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement](#), Suzanne Schwartz, *Los Alamos Reporter*, Aug 6, 2020
- [Truth Shall Set You Free](#), Erich Kuerschner, *Los Alamos Reporter*, Aug 6, 2020 (a favorite of mine).

Yes, Lawrence Livermore -- which has no high-hazard nuclear facilities -- is getting a Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement (SWEIS) but LANL - which has plenty of high-hazard nuclear facilities -- is not. Yes, the Savannah River Site (SRS) is getting an EIS for industrial pit production, but LANL is not, despite the vastly greater impacts planned to occur here.

There is a published plan for pit production at SRS. A copy is in this computer. There is no published plan for pit production at LANL. In fact there is no signed plan at all. Just a "proposal," which is stamped "UCNI" -- Unclassified Controlled Nuclear Information. You can't get it. It cannot be discussed in democratic fora.

Are you outraged yet? You should be.

### **3. Hiroshima and Nagasaki anniversaries**

There has been a torrent of excellent historical material published over the past week regarding the 75th anniversary of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings. The 15-part *Consortium News* [series](#), for example, was excellent. The webinars organized by Peter Kuznick were, we heard, excellent ([July 23 Press Briefing](#): "What Every Journalist Needs to Know About the Decision to A-Bomb Hiroshima and Nagasaki (1)"; [July 25 Public Webinar](#): "What Every Global Citizen Needs to Know About the Decision to A-Bomb Hiroshima and Nagasaki"; [July 28 Press Briefing](#): [same topic]).

All told, hundreds of articles and videos came to our inboxes, a lot of it quite moving I am sure.

Everyone needs to understand that the "myths of August" -- to use the title of Stewart Udall's book on the subject -- were frauds perpetrated on the American people for nationalistic and personal reasons.

What the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings -- being single, localized explosions which were relatively "small" as nuclear weapons go -- do not really provide is any sense of what a nuclear war would be like today.

In fact the backward, often sentimental emphasis on those events to the exclusion of today's existential situation, which demands our closest attention and action, can be, in some writers' hands, all too precious.

Most important, what was generally missing in most of the material published over the last week were practical steps as to how to achieve disarmament, mitigate the rising tsunami of extinctions (which might well include humankind), and transform our lives and communities.

I didn't say "nuclear disarmament" because that phrase is unlikely to describe the path that leads to that end, either domestically in the U.S. or internationally. It's too narrow.

Domestically, it will be easier to transform the entire set of national security priorities -- a process which is nearer than many think, and inevitable over the coming years -- than it would be to pluck out nuclear weapons and eliminate them. That said, there is already no popular barrier to eliminating land-based ballistic missiles, as a recent poll [found](#).\*

\*(Not one news outlet has yet covered that important result, despite close alignment with a sector of elite national security opinion. National security news is dominated by stenographers for the military-industrial-congressional-academic-think-tank-complex, such as [this pitch](#) yesterday by a possible Biden pick for Secretary of Defense for more acquisitions to halt "erosion" in U.S. "deterrence." These writers couldn't care less what "the people" think, even when it is presented to them by elite academics. Not yet anyway.)

Internationally, nuclear disarmament will not advance far until the U.S. empire dissolves, because it is the overwhelming existential threat to other states that emanates from the U.S. and its allies which requires effective deterrence, as we discussed in a recent [paper](#) for the diplomatic community.

As regards the recent anniversaries, it's important to not be too distracted by pious platitudes, of which this field has plenty. One might think that generalities would proceed to crucial specific commitments, but this seldom happens. What happens instead is that pious platitudes allow the speaker to harvest all the virtue signalling with none of the commitment -- not even a commitment to understand the present situation. At the same time, the dreadful confusion in our political culture between mere opinion and practical action is deepened. Platitudes have been the political norm for most of U.S. history. Obama got a Nobel Prize for clever nuclear platitudes, and then ordered up modernization or replacement of every single nuclear weapon in the U.S. arsenal.

#### **4. More on the recent contamination incident at LANL**

In our [letter](#) of August 3 we discussed the recent contamination events at LANL. As we said, the NNSA investigation report for the June 8 incident at the Main Plutonium Facility (PF-4) involving 15 people (see the red box, right column, [home page](#)) has been completed. A fairly shocking [summary](#) was published yesterday by the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DNFSB), which generally confirms the perspective offered in our [July 9 comment](#) on the *New Mexican* web site.

As explained in the last letter, this is not any kind of little "gotcha" concern. There are always going to be minor problems. This incident is quite different, especially when seen alongside so many others and in light of the causes NNSA has found. It is an indication of deep problems that have not been solved over decades and will not be solved any time soon.

More next time, thank you for your attention, and don't forget to register for Thursday's zoominar and tell your friends and potential allies about it.

Stay safe, be encouraged.

Greg, Trish, and Lydia for the Los Alamos Study Group

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[^ back to top](#)

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Aug 3, 2020

## **Zoominar this coming Wednesday, 5 - 7 pm MDT: Nuclear weapons and LANL, pit production: updates, discussion**

[Permalink](#) for this letter. Please forward as desired. Prior [letters](#) to this list.

Please endorse the [Call for Sanity not Nuclear Production](#)

Previous letter, 7/31/20: [Los Alamos County Council frustrated with NNSA abuse: LANL metastasizing to other locale\(s\); please endorse the Call for Sanity: earthquake north of LANL, more.](#)

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### **Dear New Mexico activist leaders –**

#### **1. Zoominar this coming Wednesday, 5 - 7 pm MDT: Nuclear weapons and LANL, pit production: updates, discussion**

As public awareness of renewed *de novo* warhead production grows, many people are calling with good questions (or reporting questions from others) about plutonium warhead core ("pit") production, nuclear weapons overall, Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) background or expansion, and other related matters. So on Wednesday we'll have a general Q&A session, preceded by an update on some key issues.

Since the mainstream news media -- regional and national, both -- are unlikely to catch up on what is afoot in any accurate or useful way any time soon, we'll continue these meetings on a weekly or biweekly basis as long as there is demand.

Those wishing to attend must register in advance, at [this link](#), after which you will receive a confirmation email.

Please feel free to invite anyone else you think might be interested, but please don't share these meeting coordinates on social media.

#### **2. Thank you for endorsing the [Call for Sanity not Nuclear Production](#)**

Endorsements are coming in -- not a flood, but some. Thank you!

If some you are reaching out to have questions you can't answer, you can refer them to Wednesday's virtual meeting. There will be plenty of time for "frequently asked questions" of all kinds.

#### **3. Developments**

- There have now been three contamination/radiation dose events at LANL's plutonium facility (PF-4) noted by the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DNFSB) over a recent one-month period (see [July 10, 2020 Weekly Site Report](#) [WSR]). One of those incidents made it into the press (see collection in [red box, right column](#), including this [occurrence report](#)).

The 7/10/20 WSR (published 8/1/20) refers to an unscheduled management review board meeting that was called in early July after an "uptick in the number of skin contamination events." This organization doesn't like "gotcha" journalism or "watchdogging" all that much -- it's often not fair -- but these three incidents comprise a trend, and LANL management knows it. These incidents -- and others which could be pointed to over the past few years -- are a warning that should be taken seriously. Unfortunately, sources tell us the investigation report for the recent 14-person incident on June 8, which is now awaiting final signature, is stamped UCNI (Unclassified Controlled Nuclear Information), meaning it won't be available to the public.

We believe, from multiple incidents and sources, that this administration is using the "UCNI" (and "Official Use Only") stamps to hide politically-inconvenient facts and documents.

A whistleblower from LANL who formerly worked at Rocky Flats, contacted us last year to say, among other things, that the new radiological control technicians (RCTs) at LANL are generally poorly trained and inexperienced, and that the overall safety atmosphere at PF-4 was worse, in that person's view, than it was at Rocky Flats.

We are also hearing rumors that LANL is struggling to hire and retain plutonium workers. No surprise there. As one retired LANL

scientist with glovebox experience put it to us (in the context of when to change out gloves but also applicable more widely), "the margin for error ain't much." A high degree of situational awareness is required. It can be physically taxing and it is definitely dangerous, especially if combined with production pressures from management.

The present LANL effort to rapidly train and hire 2,000 new pit production workers ([p. 12](#)), and ramp up production in that old facility to 24/7 operations for 20 pits per year (required by 2024 at the latest) is fraught with peril as we, the [Institute for Defense Analyses](#), and NNSA itself (e.g. in [this document](#) and [this one](#)) have warned.

- In Congress, nuclear weapons appropriations await action in the Senate before negotiations can begin with the House. The Senate is struggling with Covid relief legislation and is unlikely to act on appropriations bills until after Memorial Day. House appropriators would cut about \$2 billion (10%) from the NNSA request overall, including about 20% from the pit production request at LANL (still however doubling funds over the current year) and would cut 30% from the request for early-stage pit production preparations at the Savannah River Site (SRS). It is likely that the Senate will add some or all of these funds back, as happened last year.

Both the House and Senate authorized the full nuclear weapons request, a staggering increase over the current year. On Friday Eric Zuesse [reprised](#) Glen Greenwald's take on that process in the more liberal House (it's even worse in the Senate). Please don't be gullible about how this process works in the Democratic Party. Reps. Deb Haaland and Xochitl Torres-Small voted with their party to bring pit production to LANL, prevent the troops from coming home, etc. etc.

- On Friday I spent a bit of time providing background for the *Guardian's* W93 scoop ("[UK lobbies US to support controversial new nuclear warheads](#)"). There's a lot of detailed "back story" not in Borger's article. Some of it has been, we hear, retroactively classified (there's that issue again), such as the fact that NNSA moved this warhead's initial production forward [4 years](#) between December and February, from an agreed-upon 2036 to the present ambitious 2032. By ordinary government standards (as opposed to the Study Group's disarmament standards), the warhead is not actually needed until the 2040s -- which is to say *never*, given the global crises we face.

This big rush would almost certainly generate a large new near-term funding stream for LANL, with a big payoff for Sandia as well -- hundreds of millions just over the next 5 years. LANL, as I heard Thom Mason joke to his fellow nuclear weaponists in this context, actually stands for the "Los Alamos Naval Laboratory." The bought-and-paid-for Democrats on armed services voted to make this warhead a "program of record" with funding starting October 1 of this year, making it just that little bit harder to stop next year. Hopefully the Senate appropriators won't fund it. House appropriators want to slow this down but the Senate usually wins those battles, especially given the prior action of the two armed services committees, subsequently endorsed on the floors of both houses.

Having another LANL-led warhead would make LANL and Senator Heinrich happy. You can watch him complain ([video](#), 1:17 - 2:00; the earlier part about pits is highly promotional for LANL but he cites figures that aren't factual so don't be fooled) that LANL didn't have a lead warhead design project of its own past about 2022. Poor LANL.

The huge expansion sought at LANL assumes a new arms race, including but not limited to the "pit race" with SRS, "victory" in which Democrats would [prefer](#) to award to New Mexico.

Stay safe, be encouraged.

Greg, Trish, and Lydia, for the Los Alamos Study Group





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July 31, 2020

**Los Alamos County Council frustrated with NNSA abuse; LANL metastasizing to other locale(s); please endorse the Call for Sanity; earthquake north of LANL, more**

[Permalink](#) for this letter. Please forward as desired. Prior [letters](#) to this list.

Please endorse the [Call for Sanity not Nuclear Production](#)

Previous letter, 7/13/20: [Please come to the State Capitol Thursday, July 16, at 10 am for a demonstration and press conference](#)

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1. Thank you for coming to our July 16 demonstration and press conference.
2. Please endorse the [Call for Sanity not Nuclear Production](#) and asked others to do so also.
3. Useful developments and resources

Dear New Mexico activist leaders –

## **1. Thank you for coming to our July 16 demonstration and press conference.**

About 27 of us gathered (masked, and safely) at the Capitol on the anniversary of the Trinity nuclear test to ask Governor Lujan Grisham to request a Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement (SWEIS) and to focus emergency efforts on fostering green, life-saving careers and training for our young people instead of tacitly endorsing new nuclear weapons (as the State is now doing).

Everyone who wanted got a chance to speak, and many did. The *Journal* had a short article ("[Trinity Site nuclear test remembered](#)," Jul 16, 2020). A (sadly deluded) demonstration against the Governor's covid policies on a nearby street corner successfully competed for the prime spot on the evening news, LOL, but following the demonstration we had a long, in-depth Zoom meeting with a senior state official on the matter of the SWEIS and continuing contact on that topic. So again -- thank you.

## **2. Please endorse the Call for Sanity not Nuclear Production and asked others to do so also.**

Endorsements are coming in. **Please join them now, which will also encourage others!** Don't wait to endorse or to continue your outreach! Congress is acting, Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) is hiring and training future plutonium workers as best they can (this is proving difficult, as we knew it would be), equipment is being installed, and buildings are being upgraded. Events are moving quickly. At the same time, some of the non-natives are restless (see below).

As mentioned previously, **the Call is now open to individuals as well as businesses and organizations. We will soon post the growing list of endorsers (just names, no contact information).**

**When you endorse the Call, you will see a "thank you" screen and receive an email. If that doesn't happen you have skipped a required field -- check your entry one more time and hit the big green bar!**

Please don't make the mistake of thinking one can be "on our side" because of holding a *privately*-supportive *opinion*. While we have and very much welcome anonymous donors, holding a private opinion *merely* isn't really much solidarity. As I think we all know, individual *opinions* are meaningless and [have no political effect at all](#).

**Organized groups of people, like the Study Group, are quite another story!**

Politics occurs in the public domain, *which stays open only because, and to the extent, we speak and act in it*. Politics is not a private activity. It requires "showing up" *in a self-disclosing capacity*. Hannah Arendt spoke of this appearance as "a second birth." ("With word and deed we insert ourselves into the human world, and this insertion is like a second birth, in which we confirm and take upon ourselves the naked fact of our original physical appearance...") (This and much more great stuff is to be had in *The Human Condition*, available [on-line](#) [pdf].)

We need to beware of "progressive" politics -- and religion -- which doesn't speak out to limit and defund our OWN LOCAL hyperviolent institutions, in favor of investing in real human needs in a world now in crisis. Wouldn't you think doing so would be an inherent, essential part of any realistic package of democratic, social justice, and environmental reforms? We certainly do. The reforms many of us want will take money, money now going

to the military (and nuclear weapons), and they will take more humane political values, which the nuclear-military complex exists to prevent.

Here in New Mexico we have a highly militarized state, which is also far and away the most *nuclear-weapons-oriented* state in the U.S. **This gives us special responsibilities -- and an unusual degree of political power, if we choose to bring it forth.** It's right here, mostly latent, waiting for us.

**So please speak up, first in this tiniest and most convenient of ways, and then others!** Let's not support, through our silence, a brutal global empire and the associated production of new weapons of mass destruction, poisoning our hearts, minds, politics, economy, and environment, in New Mexico at least as much as anywhere.

**Spread the word please, however you think best!**

### **3. Useful developments and resources**

- "[Los Alamos County Councilor\[s\] Slam\[s\] DOE/NNSA For Denial Of Land Transfer Request](#)" (*Los Alamos Reporter*, July 30, 2020). Three Los Alamos County Council members are angry with DOE and NNSA for callously using and abusing the County.

"I'd like to say this is a [land transfer] request that we were urged to make by LANL, and let's remember why we both pursued it as a county and were encourage to pursue this request – it's for our favorite catch-all phrase, 'economic development and housing'," Maggiore said. "Why? – To aid in recruitment efforts at LANL and to support their ongoing operations. So, at LANL's urging, we pursued this land transfer only to be told after quite some time that they had no land available."

He said before he said that before he got a talking down to" by any of my fellow counselors with regard to colorful language that may follow, he would like to add that the charge of incivility is only ever deployed to silence dissent. "LANL, DOE and NNSA must do better if they want to be viewed as a trustworthy institution or as a sincere regional partner. LANL consistently wants and takes from this community. Not only do they take, they expect us to give. We give up our downtown as they take our retail spaces and subject our few surviving businesses to ever-increasing rents and increased burdens – all the while complaining that this town doesn't offer enough for them to recruit the minds they so desperately want," Maggiore said.

He said it is increasingly clear that LANL and NNSA have no interest in being real partners with Los Alamos County or any of its surrounding communities.

"It is clear they don't have our best interest at heart – it's highly questionable that they even have their own long-term interests at heart. Scratch that – it's not even that they don't have their own best interests at heart – they don't even have them in mind," Maggiore said. "Their proposed solution to our housing shortage is to build a \$1 billion, if not more, bridge across the Rio (Grande) so their employees who live in Albuquerque can have shorter commutes – local environment and existing residents be damned."

He said that's not partnership, that in fact it's the exact opposite.

...

"I'm giving notice that anything that comes before us to benefit LANL without directly benefitting us or our surrounding communities at least twice as much as it benefits them, is a non-starter for me. Their bad faith dealings have gone on long enough," Maggiore said. "It's increasingly clear in all their actions that they don't care for us, our environment or our neighbors. I find it incomprehensible and utterly unnerving that an institution made a whole branch of government devoted to nuclear weapons and stockpile stewardship can be so shortsighted and selfish. It makes me question any decisions that come out of an organization so inadequately morally compassed."

...

"Why should we or any of our neighboring communities consider a partnership with an entity that when they actually do hand land over to us to use, is still contaminated, making us on Council look like fools for believing they actually cleaned the land. Now we, and previous councils, made the whole County look like not only suckers, but entitled insensitive even bigoted a–hats who chose to put affordable housing on polluted ground. Why? Simply because we believed them," Maggiore said. "LANL, DOE, (Environmental Management), everyone, must make immediate steps to improve not only their image but their support of regional health especially in these trying times."

He went on to mention that LANL both [sic] testing abilities as well as "a fleet of RVs whose sole purpose is literally to drive around and test people".

"Why not use these vans to drive around and test people all over the region? Why should it take me or anyone else in the community who goes to the Public Health Office more than four days to get their test results when LANL employees get theirs within 36 hours max?," he asked. "We talk about addressing implicit bias and preferential treatment by our

police. Let's make no mistake, the recent and ongoing behavior of LANL is just as blatant and egregious and dismissive of communities of color. Triad, LANL, EM, DOE can and must do better to regain and keep the trust and goodwill of both their own and surrounding communities."

There is more at the link and I am sure in the recorded video. The full speech was longer and more er, "colorful." Councilors James Robinson and Pete Sheehey agreed with the substance of Maggiore's comment, despite what Sheehey described as the "rather pithy" language.

I put that long quote here because I cannot recall *ever* seeing this sense of betrayal and level of anger at DOE from elected officials in Los Alamos.

In our view the County is beginning to grasp, just barely, the magnitude of the impacts associated with the industrial pit mission.

I wonder if conservative Los Alamos County will beat out liberal Santa Fe in being the first to request a SWEIS?

- Yesterday there was an earthquake near Capulin, NM. We put out a [press backgrounder](#) with some useful references, not just for the press but for others new to the issue, some of whom are in decisive positions. You can use it as an (incomplete) primer on LANL seismicity. **For governments to become conscious of this and other site-specific realities we are going to need a SWEIS. You can help make that happen (see 2. above).**

You may have figured out that in the event of a major earthquake most if not all roads into and out of Los Alamos and White Rock will be blocked to a greater or lesser degree, and grid power may be lost from falling trees. If such an earthquake were to occur when timber is dry, the likelihood of forest fire is high. The results of multi-event emergency operations drills that deal with such scenarios are unfortunately classified -- which is another reason for a SWEIS.

- Lydia Clark has penned a useful guest editorial for the Los Alamos audience ("[Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement Is A Mountain Of Protection](#), *Los Alamos Reporter*, Jul 30, 2020). *LAR* is now being read by national reporters for news and insights.
- We have not sent you Lydia's other recent guest editorial, "[Santa Fe shouldn't become a nuclear sacrifice zone](#)," *Albuquerque Journal*, Jul 19, 2020. Op-eds such as this are usually picked up by national news aggregators and circulated to interested parties across the country, as this one was. Don't think that the audience for that letter to the editor about pit production you may be thinking of writing would remain "merely" local. It won't. Your letter will go to Capitol Hill.
- Another big story, told here in reverse chronological order:
  - [Nuclear oversight agency seeks to lease New Mexico property for offices, warehouses](#), *Santa Fe New Mexican*, Jul 25, 202
  - [NNSA seeks to lease office, light lab, and warehouse space within 50 miles of LANL on urgent basis](#), letter to congressional colleagues, Jul 23, 2020
  - [DOE/NNSA Seeks Office And Warehouse Space To Lease Within 50-Mile Radius Of LANL](#), *Los Alamos Reporter*, Jul 23, 2020
  - [Warhead agency seeks to lease office and warehouse space within a 50-mile radius of LANL](#), Jul 21, 2020

As the letter to congressional colleagues says, LANL and the Pajarito Plateau are basically "full." *LANL is spreading*. Further development, especially for plutonium mission, is going to have *beyond-linear* environmental and social impacts. The City and County of Santa Fe have little idea of what is coming and are passive. **A SWEIS is badly needed to connect the many dots in this picture. Local governments and tribes across the region need to hear this from constituents and members.**

There is much more, but that is more than enough for today. **The long and short of it is that public awareness is growing. Please use these materials however you think best to further that.**

Forward this email. Write *public* letters to editors and op eds. Write and call local officials. Write and call local organizations, churches, businesses, and your friends, asking them to endorse the [Call for Sanity, not Nuclear Production!](#)

Stay safe, be encouraged.

Greg, Trish, and Lydia, for the Los Alamos Study Group



# Los Alamos Study Group

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July 13, 2020

**Please come to the State Capitol Thursday, July 16, at 10 am for a demonstration and press conference: we want an EIS for LANL; we don't want a new Rocky Flats; and we desperately need green jobs and training**

[Permalink](#) for this letter. Please forward as desired. Prior [letters](#) to this list.

Previous letter: [As long as New Mexico sleeps, plutopian plans will advance. "Rise, like lions after slumber!"](#)

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**Dear New Mexico activist leaders –**

**1. First, thank you to all who have endorsed the [Call for Sanity not Nuclear Production](#) and asked others to endorse.**

(For some users, but not all, this buggy commercial software requires two clicks on the "submit" button for the endorsement to go through. If successful, a "thank you" message appears as is explained on the button. We are moving the Call to a better platform as fast as we can. Meanwhile please use this slightly kludgy one as heavily as possible!)

Signatures are coming in. Please don't wait to continue your outreach. Events are moving quickly.

**[2. Please come, and encourage others to come, to a socially-distanced, masked demonstration and press conference on the East Side of the State Capitol on Thursday, July 16, at 10 am.](#)**

Thursday is the anniversary of the first nuclear explosion ("Trinity"), which Lisa Gordon-Hagerty (LGH), Administrator of the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), is [celebrating](#) by a visit to V ("Victory") Site at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), where the first implosion bombs were assembled.

She is also going to LANL's plutonium facility, where the cores for future warheads are to be built.

We have asked and will be asking again Thursday, for Governor Lujan Grisham to request from LGH an environmental impact statement for LANL's proposed expansion -- a Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement (SWEIS).

We gave [a long list of strong reasons](#).

Of interest, the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) has said that current analyses are inadequate but has not -- yet -- asked for a SWEIS.

Apologies for the sudden notice, but we only recently learned of LGH's visit, but we can't let LGH and NNSA take over this anniversary, and we need to make sure the Governor understands the need for a SWEIS. We will of course invite her.

**Bring your own signs, or use one of ours.** We will have multiple speakers, to be announced. We will make sign suggestions tomorrow.

We are going to emphasize the need for better national security priorities, including serious efforts at mitigating our unfolding climate and environmental catastrophe, the importance of building community resilience and providing education, training, and jobs. *None of this is compatible with a nuclear arms race, which serves only weapons contractors like LANL.*

**We will make sure this is a covid-safe event. We don't want you there if you don't wear a mask and don't keep two meters from others.**

We also need to reach local government leaders ASAP, as explained in the [previous letter](#).

**[3. News bits](#)**

First, the *Los Alamos Reporter* discovered ("[House Appropriations Committee Wants NNSA To Submit Plans, Schedules For \[plutonium\] Pit Production](#)") that LANL's gigantic (\$6.4 billion over FY21-FY25) pit production effort --

a. rests on a "proposal" authored by LANL, not any plan approved by NNSA, and

b. is stamped "UCNI" to make it unavailable to state and local governments, tribes, and citizens.

We have known for some time from government insiders that NNSA has no signed plan for warhead core ("pit") production at LANL despite clear [statutory requirements](#). (Other [requirements](#).)

Yesterday the House Appropriations Committee said so on the record ([p. 140](#)), as the *Los Alamos Reporter* also reported.

Someone asked what the LANL pit production effort will cost. Well, no one has bothered to provide an estimate. The estimated cost of pit production - - preparations and operations, both -- at LANL remains open-ended. There is no total, and nobody at the top has taken responsibility for the details. As we said two days ago, they are winging it.

Second, and no doubt related, the House proposes to cut pit production by \$157 million (M) at LANL (19%) from NNSA's request, and \$135 M at the Savannah River Site (SRS) (31%) from the request.

Anticipating failure to meet the 2030 pit production deadline, the Committee also requires a contingency plan ([p. 140](#)) that includes the option of moving the production deadline back some years.

The W93 (Navy) warhead NNSA requested -- almost certainly a LANL-led program -- is also not funded at all.

It isn't great but it's not as bad as I expected. We are making some progress. The proposed cuts from the request and the new reporting requirements must be negotiated with the Senate Appropriations Committee, which has not released its markup, and then passed by both houses of Congress.

That's it for now. Stay safe, be encouraged. We are.

Greg, Trish, and Lydia, for the Los Alamos Study Group

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July 12, 2020

**As long as New Mexico sleeps, plutopian plans will advance. "Rise, like lions after slumber!"**

[Permalink](#) for this letter. Please forward as desired. Prior [letters](#) to this list.

Previous letter: [Efforts toward a new Rocky Flats Plant in greater Santa Fe advance: ways to engage](#)

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**Dear New Mexico activist leaders –**

We hope you all are staying healthy in body, mind and spirit. Trish and I are fine, if very busy. We've been largely focused on government these past few weeks and have not been able to keep more than a few of you in the loop. It's long past time to catch you up.

**We need your help! Small efforts from you right now can make a big difference.**

In this letter we are:

- asking urgently for your visible solidarity and help,
- providing a few new resources, and
- starting to bring you up to speed on recent developments.

We have too much to relay in just one letter. More will follow. A lot of the story will go to our general email list, which all of you are on also.

**We in New Mexico have particular opportunities which others elsewhere do not -- hence this letter.** These stem from what Arundhati Roy called "the power of proximity." Conversely, our passivity is required to enable the truly massive "plutopian" plans which are now on the move. **These plans are as fragile as they are false.** Experience shows, time and time again, that a little local opposition is fatal to them.

We have the power to stop those plans, and we have the need. Let's "[step up against expansion of LANL's nuclear mission](#)" (Lydia Clark, *Santa Fe New Mexican*, June 27).

Why do we need to do this? **Because if we allow LANL to build and operate a pit factory here, all hopes for a green, just, democratic future in this state will be lost**, while nationally the whole warhead enterprise will be "lit up" with brand new unnecessary warheads, all for the greater glory of deluded persons like Liz Cheney, Jim Inhofe, Martin Heinrich, their allies, and their corporate sponsors.

If this gigantic nuclear plan for the region goes forward over the decade there will just be too much nuclear money, too much nuclear influence, and too much nuclear corruption for New Mexico to ever break free of nuclear-military control -- especially in the context of [economic decline](#) and [emerging Southwestern megadrought](#). "There is such a thing as being too late," Martin Luther King said.

It's not a matter of this issue vs. that issue. All the important issues are really one issue: [our own level of awareness and willingness to engage](#).

Shelley's influential [stanza](#) is apt:

Rise, like lions after slumber  
In unvanquishable number!  
Shake your chains to earth like dew  
Which in sleep had fallen on you:  
Ye are many—they are few!"[\[4\]](#)

As said in our [previous letter](#) we've arranged a few powerful, focused ways to engage, which follow. **We particularly want your help in convincing local and state government officials to request a Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement (SWEIS) for the proposed expansion of LANL,** including but not limited to the proposed expansion of plutonium missions, from the Department of Energy (DOE).

We've gathered some of the main talking points as to why a SWEIS is needed in this [Letter to NM Environment Department re: Need for SWEIS at LANL](#) (June 29).

Here's what you can do:

- First, please endorse, and get others to endorse, our public [Call for Sanity not Nuclear Production](#) (*now open to individuals as well as businesses, organizations, and churches*). You can fill in the on-line form, or print, fill it out, and mail it in.
- Next, please read the [letter to NMED](#) as a factual foundation for your action. **The scale of the LANL's plans, and their prospective impacts, may shock you. Use your outrage. It is a precious resource.**
- Then, write or call the NMED's capable Public Information Officer Maddy Hayden ([contact information](#)) to ask NMED to request a new SWEIS for LANL. I am sure she will collect your letters and calls for presentation to Secretary Kenney.
- If you live in Santa Fe, please contact your city councilor and any others you may know about supporting this resolution: [Requesting a Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement \(SWEIS\) for the proposed expansion of LANL, including the proposed expansion of plutonium missions.](#)
- If you can, please contact Santa Fe County councilors urging them to adopt a similar resolution, or even to request a SWEIS individually. We will help.
- If you live elsewhere in northern New Mexico, please contact your local government or tribal leaders urging them to request a new SWEIS for LANL, either individually or as a governing body.
- There are other supporting actions you can take listed [here](#).
- **Let us know how you fare with these efforts. Your feedback is very valuable!**

At present, there is very little awareness and opposition to the truly huge plutonium plans being hatched for northern New Mexico. The newspapers have been very reluctant to publish what is known, or to probe the abundant mysteries.

We know that as of July 3 LANL's plan (which would cost at least \$6.4 billion over the next five years) had not been signed by NNSA. They have been "winging it," in other words. The last thing they want under such circumstances is a SWEIS. The public would [see the Big Board](#).

As we said in February ("[Administration seeks 49% increase in Los Alamos nuclear weapons activities, 33% plus-up for LANL overall](#)"), NNSA's plans for LANL -- or are they LANL's plans for NNSA, or DoD's plans? -- are vast. Both the House and Senate armed services committees have now authorized the entire Trump nuclear weapons budget. [Heinrich](#):

Senator Heinrich again supported full funding to secure Los Alamos National Laboratory's (LANL) role as the nation's Center of Excellence for Plutonium Research. **The bill authorizes \$1.1 billion [in FY21 alone] for LANL's ongoing plutonium operations and pit production programs.** The funding supports personnel, equipment and other activities at LANL to meet pit production requirements by 2026; highlights include, \$611 million for plutonium operations, \$226 million to support pit production, \$30 million to construct new fire-control panels in PF-4, \$27 million for fire protection and equipment, power and communications improvements in PF-4, \$37 million for a new transuranic liquid waste handling and \$169 million for upgrades related to replacing the outdated Chemistry and Metallurgy Research (CMR) building at LANL.

Tomorrow we will all find out the details of what, if anything, the House Appropriations Committee proposes to cut from these programs. Our best guess is that no LANL pit production funding will be cut, although the better pit production project in South Carolina will likely be cut. Senate appropriators will likely act later this month. Last year they reversed the House.

Unfortunately, liberal arms control groups and many "antinuclear" organizations have lined up, or have been shoved into line, behind the idea that LANL is the indispensable pit factory. This makes New Mexico's situation much worse, and it hurts the whole country and world by making new warheads possible using LANL's production in the 2020s. Nearly all the real efforts and litigation preparations of these organizations are going into trying to keep the Savannah River Site (SRS) from making pits, while offering only token statements, if any, about stopping pit production over the coming decade in Los Alamos -- including fantasies about "pit reuse" as a substitute for production. These sound good but are politically meaningless.

News flash: the Pentagon is never going to put 50-60+ year-old pits into new warheads. This was a realistic possibility in the 1990s and 2000s but the shelf-life of this argument has expired. We have reached the point in nuclear history where we need to either retire significant numbers of older warheads or else remodel the big, partially-built plutonium facility at SRS for use in the late 2030s. It is the only practical option short of finally retiring some old warheads.

A "little" Los Alamos pit factory was never a reasonable compromise. It never was "little" and at \$6.4 billion for the next 5 years alone, just to expand pit production at LANL -- more than twice the estimate of 3 years ago -- it sure isn't little now.

Most House Democrats want pit production focused on Los Alamos. The only choices House Armed Services leadership is allowing are: a) Los Alamos alone, or b) two production sites, with Los Alamos starting sooner. Under option a), Los Alamos is under a legal mandate to produce as many pits as NNSA wants to produce at both sites together (at least 80 each year, or more than 100/year on average).

The biggest problem with the "Los Alamos compromise" (among many) is that it has no scientific, engineering, or management merit. That is why there have to be two pit production sites. Los Alamos is slated to be an industrial pit production site because of politics. SRS is slated to be an

industrial pit production site because of [engineering merit](#), as multiple in-depth studies have shown and as we will shortly explain (again) in the next Bulletin.

**The politics of nuclear weapons expansion are incompatible with a politics of climate mitigation, equality, community resilience, and justice, locally as well as nationally.** So progressives who look the other way when it comes to the military-nuclear complex in their own back yards are just not what they say they are. There is no "hope" and there will be no "change" without taking a forceful, public stand about the huge nuclear weapons expansion taking place here. Glenn Greenwald's [picture](#) is all too accurate:

Perhaps most remarkable is the amount of the military budget itself. It is [three times more](#) than the planet's second-highest military spender, China; it is ten times more than the third-highest spender, Saudi Arabia; it is 15 times more than the military budget of the country most frequently invoked by Committee members as a threat to justify militarism: Russia; and it is more than the next 15 countries *combined* spend on their military. They authorized this kind of a budget in the midst of a global pandemic as tens of millions of newly unemployed Americans [struggle even to pay their rent](#).

How does this happen? How do Democrats succeed in presenting an image of themselves based on devotion to progressive causes and the welfare of the ordinary citizen while working with *Liz Cheney* to ensure that vast resources are funneled to the weapons manufacturers, defense sector and lobbyists who fund their campaigns? Why would a country with no military threats from any sovereign nation to its borders spend almost a trillion dollars a year for buying weapons while its citizens linger without health care, access to quality schools, or jobs? Who are the people in Congress doing this, and why?

When these Committee members [in House Armed Services, Deb Haaland and Xochitl Torres Small; in Senate Armed Services, Martin Heinrich; in Senate nuclear appropriations, Tom Udall] return to their blue districts, they talk endlessly about topics such as the NRA, LGBTs, [and hiking], and reproductive rights — issues on which many do little work and over which they wield little influence — in order to manufacture brands for themselves as good, caring progressives, which is how they are re-elected over and over from very blue districts. But as these little-discussed proceedings demonstrate, when they return to Washington, what they really do is spend their time collaborating with lobbyists for weapons manufacturers to ensure that as much taxpayer money as possible is diverted away from social programs and into the coffers of the “defense” industry.

...

And it is impossible to overstate the central role which the concocted, wildly exaggerated [sic -- *entirely* concocted] “Russia threat” plays in all of this. Over and over, the pro-war Committee members from both parties invoked the scary threat of Moscow and the Kremlin to justify this bloated budget of imperialism and aggression.

That is what we see as well.

Best wishes to all, stay safe,

Greg Mello, for the Los Alamos Study Group

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June 23, 2020

## Efforts toward a new Rocky Flats Plant in greater Santa Fe advance; ways to engage

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Dear New Mexico activist leaders –

### 1. Efforts to build a new Rocky Flats Plant in the greater Santa Fe area advance

Last week the full Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC), strongly influenced by Senator Heinrich (Ranking Member, Strategic Forces Subcommittee) in this matter, reported out a draft FY21 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) that would provide \$1.1 billion for plutonium warhead cores ("pits") at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) next fiscal year (i.e. starting October 1).

This is the level the Administration proposed for pit production at LANL, including some of the necessary supporting construction. Heinrich's [press release](#), posted in its entirety without journalistic content as is usual on the [Los Alamos Daily Post](#) bulletin board, explains:

Senator Heinrich again supported full funding to secure Los Alamos National Laboratory's (LANL) role as the nation's Center of Excellence for Plutonium Research. The bill authorizes \$1.1 billion for LANL's ongoing plutonium operations and pit production programs [for fiscal year 2021]. The funding supports personnel, equipment and other activities at LANL to meet pit production requirements by 2026; highlights include, \$611 million for plutonium operations, \$226 million to support pit production, \$30 million to construct new fire-control panels in PF-4, \$27 million for fire protection and equipment, power and communications improvements in PF-4, \$37 million for a new transuranic liquid waste handling and \$169 million for upgrades related to replacing the outdated Chemistry and Metallurgy Research (CMR) building at LANL.

The SASC likewise [endorsed](#) the requested level for warhead activities overall. (Background: "[Administration seeks 49% increase in Los Alamos nuclear weapons activities, 33% plus-up for LANL overall](#)," press release of Feb 23, 2020).

**This proposed funding authorization triples annual spending on plutonium programs and supporting construction at LANL.**

**It is also more than twice comparable spending at the other pit production site in South Carolina.**

**No journalist in northern New Mexico has written about this. No liberal or "progressive" organization, no environmental organization, no church, no political party, no local government, no tribe, no newspaper, are as yet opposing this momentous development.**

**Have you asked any?**

**Many liberals and "progressive" Democrats tacitly support a factory at LANL, just as many US corporations profited handsomely from fascism in the 1930s. This tacit support by New Mexico liberals on this issue goes well beyond the support of Senators Domenici and Bingaman, Governor Richardson, and even the early Trump Administration for this mission at LANL. None of these [thought](#) LANL was a good place for this dangerous and dirty mission.**

The SASC authorization level will likely prevail. It usually does. The Strategic Forces Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee (HASC) had its markup yesterday, passing their draft unanimously without comment or amendment, which is silent on pit production. Last year, the new Democratic majority in the HASC tried to strike a slightly different course than the Senate, focusing pit production at LANL only, amid other tweaks to nuclear programs. They failed. They appear to have given up.

Thanks primarily to the New Mexico delegation, production of at least 80 pits per year (ppy) by 2030 is now a statutory requirement, with TWO sites required to build toward 80+ ppy. LANL is required to undertake "surge" production as soon as possible, at least temporarily taking over all U.S. pit production if the factory in South Carolina is delayed (a near-certainty).

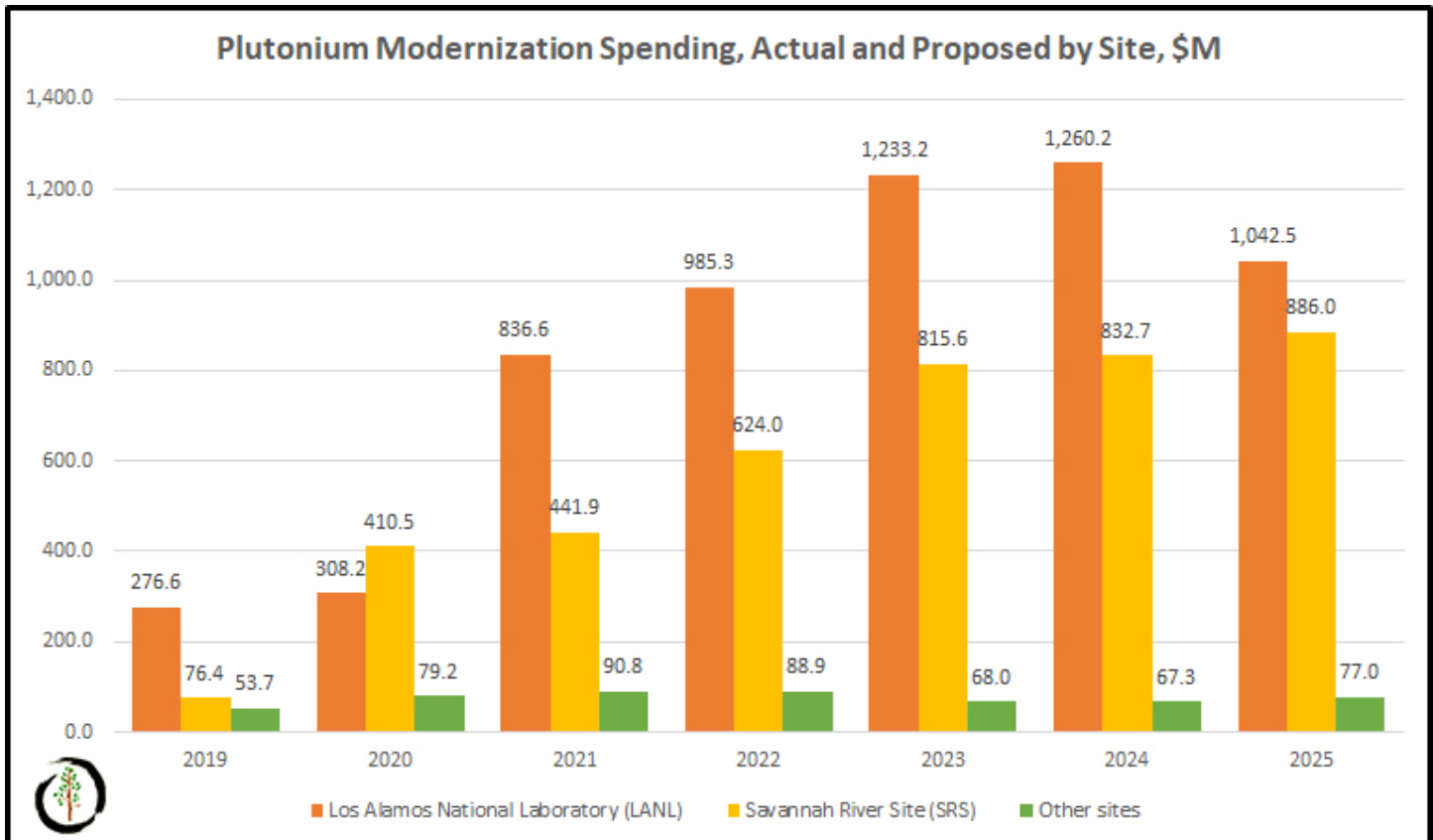
Achieving this pit production goal will be as difficult as it is stupid. As noted on these pages many times before, production at LANL has no engineering merit, as NNSA itself understood just a few years ago. Pit production is not needed at all to maintain all current U.S. weapons for decades. (Forget "pit reuse." Not needed, not really practical: won't happen.) Maintaining existing warheads is not the purpose of pit production -- making new kinds of warheads while enriching contractors is the sole real purpose; the rest are rationalizations.

The House Appropriations Committee may (or may not) try to shave some funding from this plan. Senator Udall can be counted upon to prevent that as best he can. He usually succeeds. Even if appropriations bills are late, NNSA has an extra \$8 billion in Weapons Activities funds available to draw upon, so they can get started on October 1 with an increased tempo of activities. No doubt they are gearing up right now.

The chart below shows the site breakdown of "Plutonium Modernization" over the coming years, as presented this past February. This is, basically, preparation for pit production.

This chart does not include the additional \$200 to \$400 million/year which is flowing to LANL in plutonium-related infrastructure and equipment like those Senator Heinrich mentions. It is these which bring the 2021 tally to \$1.1 billion.

Of course it does not include the other elements of [the proposed LANL expansion](#) -- all of which concern designing and testing nuclear weapons.



At the Study Group, we have been involved in national discussions with colleagues about pit production. Congress will be finishing its annual "defense" bills soon, given the pandemic -- and upcoming election. Much of our work has to be there.

**2. We had a second successful Zoominar on pit production, this time from a more national perspective. A few briefing slides need finishing before they can all be posted.**

**3. We see little or no prospects for positive results from current liberal, progressive, and radical efforts in New Mexico -- across the board. Many people are being far too gullible. Authority figures are selling fantasies of progress so business as usual can continue in all the important ways. While essentially nobody we know falls for Trump's crude propaganda, it is a quite different story for "progressive" propaganda and the political-social engineering that goes with it. We see political and moral regression, not progress.**

The Study Group is not any kind of "antinuclear" organization or a "lab critic," or "watchdog," or any of the other marginalizing, pejorative identities we get stuck with. Most of us have been involved in practical efforts for environmental, economic, and religious renewal for a long time -- sometimes successfully, sometimes not. We have taken the trouble to train ourselves in the sciences, in technology policy, in religion, in sustainability, and in other ways. We set aside lucrative, easy careers to serve the community. We have some experience. I want to speak from that experience now.

I am not just speaking for myself when I say this, but **everyone I have spoken to sees political regression, not progress, in the current riots and more broadly, in our communities over the past few years, as well as nationally.**

People don't seem to realize how much and in what ways they are being used and are thereby losing, not increasing, their autonomy and personal

political power, or how this process is contributing to the loss of democracy. As a society we are losing the plot, the understanding and storyline that will allow us to address our society's and civilization's main challenges.

We are being divided. It's addictive, and it's useful to powerful people and institutions who want to hang onto and increase their already vast power, regardless of its damage to others and the environment.

Nationally, the interlinked political, social, economic -- and, out of the limelight, environmental -- situations in the U.S. are deteriorating fast. Nobody has a monopoly on insights into this complex process of decline. We all need to pay attention.

Most of the commentary we see is incredibly shallow and misleading -- *most*, not all. By and large, citizens who are really concerned are being encouraged to deny the gravity of our situation -- vis-a-vis climate for example -- and are being sold nice, easy narratives that have nothing to do with reality.

How can any of us navigate such polluted, shallow, waters? Certainly talk alone is too cheap.

We have arranged various ways to engage powerfully on the issue outlined here, the deeper adumbrations of which will be clear to you. Without accounting for especially powerful or limiting circumstances you may have, here is a partial list:

- Support our [Call for Sanity not nuclear production](#) (now open to individuals as well as businesses, organizations, and churches). You and your contacts can fill out the on-line version, or print out the web page and mail it in.
- If you live in Santa Fe, contact city councilors about supporting the two resolutions:
  - 1) [Requesting a Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement \(SWEIS\) for the proposed expansion of Los Alamos National Laboratory \(LANL\), including the proposed expansion of plutonium missions](#); and
  - 2) [Prohibiting the City of Santa Fe from entering into any development agreement involving any nuclear weapons agencies or their instrumentalities](#).
- Write LTEs and op eds -- including in the *Los Alamos Reporter*, by far the most accurate and up-to-date source for news about Los Alamos.
- There are several actions they can take listed on our [action sheet from our website here](#), e.g.
  - Write or call local officials. Open letters are best. Tell politicians that your support hinges on their strong public support for cutting back the nuclear weapons industry and US military spending, and doing something actually relevant and important with those billions (up-to-date data [here](#)). You will find the words.
  - Write or call our congressional delegation
  - Write candidates.
- Contact your friends.
- Contact newspaper editors asking for more coverage of nuclear and defense issues. The few articles which do appear seldom connect many dots. For example, after many days the *Journal* did cover the Senate Armed Services markup, but readers are not informed that this bill would use up more half of all discretionary spending, i.e. the spending Congress decides upon. No money for education? Covid response? To read our newspapers, you would think the authorizations Heinrich crow's about just appear from thin air.
- Become a sustaining donor of LASG, or make a one-time donation. Visit our [contribute page](#) for more information on different ways to contribute.
- Get friends to join our national email listserve and/or our New Mexico activists listserve if they are not on them. Instructions are at the top of this email.

These are powerful actions because we do them together, around and through a powerful organization. Synergies will occur, as they have in the past. People and information will come forward. Opportunities will appear. It sounds vague because the details are not predictable, but overall this process is as predictable as the sun rising.

As with any worthwhile endeavor, some trust is involved, and some commitment.

I want to stop there. I am not going to send many interesting things which might distract from these central messages.

Stay in touch with each other, stay safe, thank you for your attention, call or write us,

Greg, Trish, Lydia, and gang



June 1, 2020

## Letter to antinuclear groups re organizational endorsements for Los Alamos pit factory

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### Dear New Mexico activist leaders –

We were outraged to hear of a national effort to recruit organizational endorsements to a sign-on letter supporting a plutonium warhead core ("pit") factory in Los Alamos.

The sign-on letter is supposed to be filed with the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) tomorrow as a comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed pit facility in South Carolina.

NNSA doesn't care about such comments except insofar as they could lead to litigation or real political action in a future, post-EIS administration.

But real damage could be done by nonprofits and antinuclear groups committing to the idea that Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) is the best place for pit production and should be used for that purpose.

Our emergency response from this past Saturday is here: [Letter to "NukeNet": concerns about organizational sign-on aimed at focusing pit production at LANL, May 30, 2020](#).

There has been an 18-or-so year effort by some parties in the Alliance for Nuclear Accountability (ANA), in the arms control community in Washington, in the foundation community, and in the Democratic Party, to promote (or in other cases, stand aside while others promote) the expansion of LANL's pit-making capability (which currently stands at zero) as a "lesser evil" -- lesser than doing the same work elsewhere. We don't buy it.

Northern New Mexico, in other words, is supposed to sacrifice for the greater good of the country as a whole, as interpreted by people in Washington and elsewhere who don't give a damn about New Mexico and whose vision of the "greater good" has never been very clear.

We have heard this many times and in many places, far more often in Washington, DC than in New Mexico, so it's understandable that many New Mexicans who opposed nuclear weapons are unaware of the continuity and extent of these efforts.

Part of the problem, you will understand, is that if, say, you work for a big nonprofit in Washington that wants to be taken seriously by the national security state, or is funded by a big foundation that wants to play the same game, you have to say "Yes" to making pits *someplace*. Virtually all these groups are aligned with the Democratic Party, so standing with New Mexico Democrats is a LOT easier than any other alternative.

Standing up to NNSA and the Pentagon and telling a general with four stars that he does not need a new warhead, and really meaning it -- investing real political capital in that position, and working hard for it -- seems beyond today's Democrats and NGO think tanks and lobbyists.

If you are a staff member in such an organization, you will be fired if you step out of line. So we should be sympathetic -- and we are -- but at the same time we need to realize that *this is the system that has been undercutting efforts at peace and justice since the end of the Cold War*. Even partial disarmament is "unrealistic" (just ask Barack Obama). "Our committee will lose face and become a laughingstock," I heard not so long ago from a friend. The system is locked -- paralyzed.

Far from the hallways of Washington, the paralysis which prevents desperately-needed reform creates desperate people across America -- and in northern New Mexico -- who aren't getting health care precisely because the Air Force is getting a new ballistic missile system and a new warhead, with new pits. Desperate people who aren't getting humane governance of any kind, let alone the services they think they are paying for in payroll and other taxes.

We have heard from people in northern New Mexico who say "We need those LANL jobs! *Without LANL, northern New Mexico would dry up and blow away!*" That's an exact quote from a person who identifies on the far left of the political spectrum.

That is the [Stockholm Syndrome](#) talking. That is the talk of a colonial subject who has internalized the colonizer's narrative. A person hostage to an abusive relationship. To paraphrase Caitlin Johnstone, it's like saying "My boyfriend is a serial killer, but he can cook."

Our [suggested actions](#) are the same as a few days ago. (They do not include the confusion that writing NEPA comments is any kind of political action. Signing onto somebody's NEPA comments is a dangerous substitute for political action, like shouting into a hole in the ground and thinking you have done something important.)

The winners of tomorrow's primaries in New Mexico Congressional District 3 will need education. The two front-runners on the Democratic side think LANL can do something for the District. It can - *by shrinking*, along with the rest of the nuclear-military-industrial complex and US ambitions for global hegemony, which are increasingly dangerous.

Managing US imperial decline while redirecting attention and money to urgent needs like climate mitigation, economic justice, and restructuring our society along much more sustainable and equitable lines is the task before us.

Support communities and ecosystems, not LANL.

LANL cannot do work that New Mexico needs, or the world needs, with the smallest of exceptions that only prove the rule. The belief that it does, or could do so, is a major factor causing loss of democracy, inequality, and poverty in northern NM. It places those who hold such ideas to the right of Eisenhower's Farewell Address, unwittingly I am sure.

LANL is a bomb lab and would-be manufacturing plant, with little else to show for the billions involved. It's fortunes rise and fall with the military budget as a whole and with the US Empire. Thus has it ever been. The source of all propaganda otherwise is LANL.

We often quote Manuel Garcia, former Lawrence Livermore physicist:

The "brilliant minds" and "use[less] infrastructure" [quoting another author, with whom Garcia is disagreeing] of the nuclear labs are incapable of "work the world needs." That these nuclear weapons playpens might be "useful" to civilian purposes is a great misconception widespread among the public. Certainly, some of the individuals in these labs could apply themselves to "useful" work, applying technical skill to improve social conditions, if they were placed in the right setting (and in rare cases, on their own as lone scientist-inventors). But, such people are the exception. The vast majority are unable to conceptualize actual social needs, and few have technical expertise that is applicable to "real world" problems. Most of these "brilliant minds" need massive high-tech resources to work on arcane details of exotic physical situations with no relation to the experiences and problems that face most of humanity. Also, most of these "brilliant minds" expect lots of money for their work, and would not be cost effective to projects aimed at improving social conditions. Just like an old battleship is useless for passenger or cargo or fishing or ocean research purposes, the nuclear weapons people are similarly useless outside their niche. The only way to make the battleship useful for peaceful ends is break it up for scrap metal. Similarly, the only way to get "usefulness" out of nuclear weapons experts is to put them into civilian occupations at an entry level, and let them start over in a new "peace" mode. Few will show themselves to be brilliant.

The waste of the labs is that they suck up national resources (money and graduates of technical schools) that would be better spent on projects for the solution of real social problems (e.g., clean water worldwide, renewable energy, public health, care of the environment, etc.) and the education of new young experts to man these projects. Just as the Iraq and Afghanistan wars suck money out of the federal budget and impoverish our society (lack of funding at state and local level for social programs), so do the nuclear labs act like little fiscal black holes of war, that suck up what could otherwise be useful investment in technical education and socially beneficial research. The labs cannot be reprogrammed, only melted down and recycled.

So far northern New Mexico and Santa Fe are passive with respect to the new Rocky Flats Plant being planned at LANL. There is no visible opposition, while our congressional delegation and governor provide much support. There is as yet no pain or accountability among Democratic circles, where the LANL Rocky Flats plan was hatched and nurtured. (This was not Trump's idea, nor was it an NNSA or Pentagon idea -- not at all.)

So get businesses and organizations to join the [Call for Sanity](#). Write letters. Tell politicians that your support hinges on their strong public support for cutting back the nuclear weapons industry and US military spending, and doing something actually relevant and important with those billions (up-to-date data [here](#)). You will find the words.

Stay in touch, stay safe,

Greg Mello



# Los Alamos Study Group



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May 27, 2020

## Updates; briefing slides; Zoom meeting planned; Santa Fe Midtown; what you can do; investing disproportionately in political failure

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**Dear New Mexico activist leaders –**

Good afternoon, everyone.

### May 19 meeting slides

Our Zoom meeting on May 19 was fairly well-attended; several people later said it was helpful. The slides we used, which correspond to the agenda sent in the previous [letter](#), were posted after the meeting ("[LANL's proposed expansion and plutonium warhead core \("pit"\) plans in context](#)," May 19, 2020).

Out of fairness to those who attended, we won't post the recording Zoom made of this meeting and we will likewise not post recordings of future meetings. Just like in-person public meetings (but easier for people with computers to attend), people need to show up to participate in discussions. It's an elementary aspect of our public life, as Hannah Arendt so eloquently said (see the inspiring section on "Action" in *The Human Condition*, [pdf](#), or the Stanford gloss under "[Arendt's Theory of Action](#)").

### June 9 national Zoom meeting: let us know if you want to attend

We will have a nationally-advertised Zoom meeting, also mostly on pits but with more on national policy, on [Tuesday June 9 at 5 pm MDT](#). Everyone who is interested is welcome at this virtual meeting, but because this will be more widely advertised and therefore with more potential for hacking and other mischief, we'd like folks to indicate their interest to us beforehand. Then we'll send the meeting ID and password to you. Please do not share them, especially on social media, but meanwhile do feel free to ask others whom you think might be genuinely interested to write us for what amounts to a virtual "ticket." We have space for 100 people.

We'll send this invite out more widely in a day or two, so you will get it again. To repeat, all genuinely-interested parties are welcome, no matter what your political or national security views.

Meanwhile we will discuss pit issues more thoroughly in next Bulletin, coming in a few days.

### "What can I do?" This recent [Action Sheet](#) offers suggestions for New Mexicans

Please consider these suggested actions ("[New Mexico's People and Environment -- or New Nuclear Weapons: Act Now before It Is Too Late](#)") and forward them to any and all interested parties!

We really need volunteer help recruiting businesses, organizations, and churches to the [Call for Sanity. Not Nuclear Production](#) ! Call and write your friends, please. (For background see [this letter](#).)

We are counting on you!

### Santa Fe Midtown Project Update

Lydia Clark, our Outreach Director, has been keeping a close watch on this project -- as close as its uniquely-opaque and likely-illegal process allows. The Midtown project is in our view deeply flawed in its basic conception -- we don't like the notion of the City transferring this large, centrally-located site into private developers' hands, and we do not believe the City will be able to control its development and uses once it is transferred -- but our

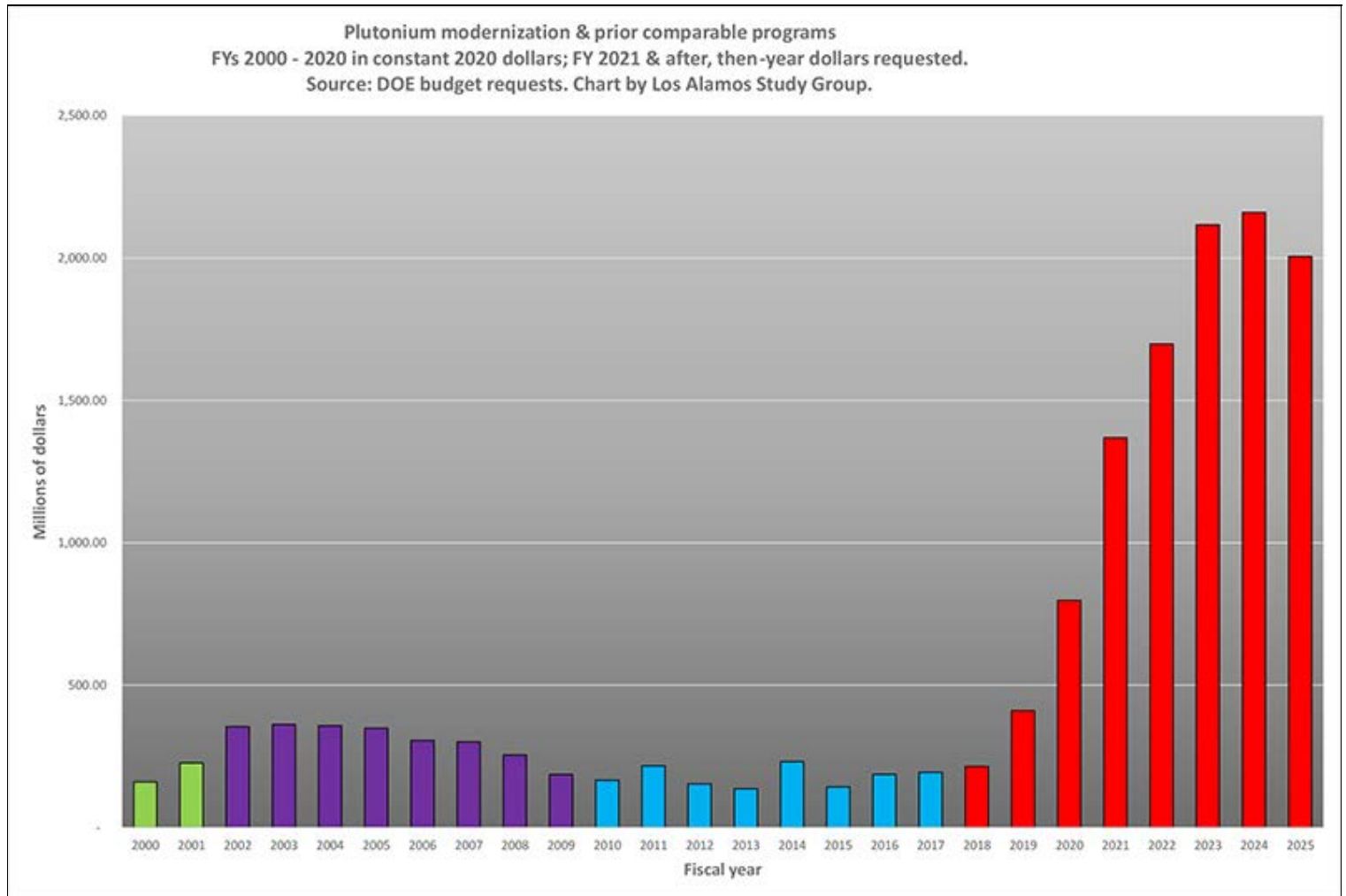
greatest concern is the keen interest in the site exhibited by the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) and Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL).

LANL is rapidly expanding, or trying to do so, principally in plutonium warhead core ("pit") production. It is threatening to outgrow its 40 square-mile site and its 941 buildings. LANL needs thousands of new houses and apartments for the thousands of additional nuclear weapons workers it is planning to hire. It needs educational facilities to train its technicians. It may try to partner with educational institutions to do so at Midtown, now that it's plans for developing the whole Midtown site have fallen through.

NNSA and LANL need the cooperation, or at least the official passivity, of the City and County of Santa Fe in order to stand up their proposed plutonium pit factory at LANL. We know LANL and NNSA have been involved in secret meetings with Mayor Webber, City staff, political donors, and land developers as well as with other local government and state officials. We don't know all that has been discussed -- we just can't chase down every lead. This is a corrupt process, with a mere facade of openness.

Weapons are LANL's *raison d'etre* and growth sector ("[Administration seeks 49% increase in Los Alamos nuclear weapons activities, 33% plus-up for LANL overall](#)", press release, Feb 23, 2020). LANL *does* very little besides nuclear weapons ([breakdown](#) by program, last year), and *can do* very little besides nuclear weapons ([in a nutshell](#); [more explicit](#), see pp. 23-25; [another discussion](#) from a different angle).

What is going on is a form of [enclosure](#) -- and a plutonium gold rush:



[\(link to graph\)](#)

*It's amazing, isn't it, that so many people in Santa Fe are apparently ready to welcome a new Rocky Flats Plant into their community. LANL damages many minds -- including in the so-called progressive community, which is overall quite confused about what LANL is, does, can do, does for New Mexico, and ought to do.*

What's the alternative? Among the questions Lydia asked the developers was this one:

*Santa Fe has an opportunity to create a center in which sustainability is a primary focus in every way. Are there any plans to include partners/businesses/education for sustainable programs in agriculture, energy - specifically alternative energy sources to fossil fuels, wind and solar projects, or other potential sustainable business?*

No straight answers have been forthcoming.

Santa Fe City and County have no climate-friendly, community-resilience-oriented policies to speak of. We drift, and have now hit an iceberg, with 150,000 or so people on board. The Covid-19 pandemic has exposed how frothy, unsustainable, or just plain distracting and dumb far too much of our economy really is. Yet "economic growth" remains a watchword, a shibboleth nobody is willing to challenge.

**There is too little reality-based critical thinking available in our public political narratives, or from candidates, or through our electoral system -- so why do they absorb so much attention?**

This is a big, important topic that this short letter is only going to acknowledge exists, not diagnose or offer much in the way of remedies. It would be an important first step, however, if more people acknowledged openly that there is a lot more amiss (and just plain missing) in our political narratives and campaigns than is usually admitted -- or implied by the vast attention being paid to these campaigns by well-meaning citizens.

Our slickly-packaged, heavily-financed political campaigns offer almost zero understanding of the issues, so nobody gets elected with a mandate for change. Quite the opposite, in fact. Once in office, do they and their parties work to reform the broken US election process -- say with rank-choice voting, a real breath of fresh air?

Many well-meaning citizens devote most of the political attention they have to elections hoping, like Charlie Brown, that Lucy will not move the football. The net result is to firm up business as usual, instead of changing it.

By "reality-based," I mean here the wider realities which are the matrix for human life and institutions, including our society, our economy (with its metastatic financial arrangements), and our political life. I mean living nature, geology, non-human life, chemistry, physics, ecology.

Our politics largely ignores the planet we live on and the likelihood of our continuing our present ways of life (which is zero, of course). Denial is not just encouraged -- it's required. Yet otherwise intelligent and caring citizens flock to embrace one or another reality-denying candidate.

Some of us seem to have stopped thinking. "We" invest hope in oxymorons like "economic growth," "economic development," and "green growth," none of which are or can be actual *things*.

Our elected "progressives" will seemingly do anything for "jobs," as if there were no alternative way to think about our economic affairs. As if Right Livelihood didn't matter (that's just some dead guy's morality, and everybody has their own truth, right?) and of course, as if climate collapse didn't exist.

We've learned to hate the other political party instead of listening hard to what truths may be on offer there. We embrace the "lesser evilism" offered by our own corrupt party, whichever that may be. Despite decades of evidence otherwise, we think that if we can just elect this or that party favorite, we can lift people out of poverty. A new day will dawn!

No doubt some of our electoral choices are important. But no elected official will be able to turn much if at all toward the light unless his or her supporters are willing to engage in a more rigorous, patient search for truth and demand the same from them, and unless our broken electoral system is repaired, ending control by corrupt party mafias.

The following couple of articles bear closely on reality-based issues we discuss in these letters. We found them valuable.

- "[It Will Get Darker Before the Dawn](#)," Paul Gilding, May 26, 2020, in full at [Cockatoo Chronicles](#), text sans footnotes at [resilience.org](#)

Having a global pandemic with devastating economic impacts used to be one of these predictable [1](#) and catastrophic 'black elephants'. Then it arrived – but we had *chosen* not to prepare. The others are now stampeding toward us, including climate change [2](#), the collapse of the fossil fuel industry [3](#), social and economic inequality [4](#), ocean and eco-system collapse [5](#), famine [6](#), mass refugees [7](#) and others. As well as their direct economic impact, many will also drive social instability, civil unrest, nationalism, debt and credit crises [8](#), protectionism, geopolitical realignment and military conflict [9](#) – further magnifying the economic consequences.

That these are all stampeding toward us is known. What is unknown is whether we – taking the lessons of COVID-19 – will now decide to make different choices. Will our political and business leaders decide to act? We will we demand they do so?

If we choose not to, the consequences are clear. While each event will have varying national, regional and global economic impacts; collectively, they risk merging into a mega crisis and triggering global economic collapse. That is an arguable risk. But there is near certainty they will together unleash devastating economic, security and social consequences.

So have we suffered enough yet? What would it take to drive the level of transformational change we need – not just on climate change but on inequality, ecosystem collapse and all the others impacts now so clearly on the horizon?

In considering this question, we should first recognise there is no real dispute on the risks. Very few question they are real and coming our way. ...

I don't want you to think 'We always figure these things out.' I want you to face reality. We won't act until we shift to what activist and writer Margaret Klein Salomon calls "[Facing the Truth](#)". When we face the truth about the state we are in, what's at risk and how bad it could get – we will act. But that moment is not here yet.



**It will get much darker before the dawn.** [emphasis in original]

- "[The Light at the End](#)," (Nafeez Ahmed, *Yes Magazine*, May 11, 2020) (sent by a journalist -- thank you)

A basic precondition for being able to cross the threshold is acceptance: recognizing that the system as we know it, including many established structures taken for granted, is now bound to fall away. There may well be much to salvage, but it is futile to expect that the neoliberal "normality" of endless growth from which the pandemic erupted can simply continue unimpeded. It cannot—and efforts to revive it will be systemically self-defeating.

When we emerge, we will have crossed a permanent threshold, from which there is no return, because there is simply no more "normal" to which to return.

That much is clear from the works of anthropology professor Joseph Tainter of Utah State University, whose seminal study, *The Collapse of Complex Societies*, showed how every new layer of complexity a civilization generates to solve its problems tends to generate its own new layer of problems, resulting in a vicious cycle of diminishing returns.

Eventually, a civilization gets too complex to sustain itself, and cannot but collapse.

Exactly how that collapse takes place—and the opportunities for renewal it brings—varies depending on the context. Professor Thomas Homer-Dixon, university research chair in the faculty of environment at the University of Waterloo, has shown how global industrial civilization is particularly vulnerable due to the tightly coupled nature of its highly complex financial, food, economic, and energy systems. This complexity heightens the probability that different "stressors" interact within the system to generate a system-wide "synchronous failure," whereby multiple interconnected elements end up failing simultaneously.

In 2008, "synchronous failure" unleashed a perfect storm of oil price spikes, food price hikes, and climate-induced food production failures interacting with collapsing housing markets and banks. The [interlocking crises](#) paved the way for the Arab Spring, laying the groundwork for the collapse of Syria into internecine civil war, in turn driving an unprecedented mass migration crisis which played a key role in tipping over Western political systems into the mainstreaming of xenophobia (manifested in victories for Trump, Brexit, and beyond).

Today, the economic slump accompanying national lockdowns has yielded massive destruction in the fossil fuel industry. As global demand plummets, the crash in oil market prices has driven profitability to an all-time low—too low, arguably, for many U.S. shale companies previously skimming the edges of bankruptcy.

This is not a temporary blip. A dramatic contraction of economic activity will now be unavoidable over the coming 18 months at minimum—either due to relaxing restrictions and driving up death rates to a degree that collapses social and health care systems, or maintaining restrictions that keep economies flat. This means prices will likely be too low for the oil industry as we know it to survive. By the time supply constraints allow prices to rise, which would only happen when demand is able to rise substantially after the pandemic, much of the fossil fuel sector as we know it will be beyond repair.

This disruption of a global system dependent on fossil fuels poses a serious risk to food, manufacturing, and other supply chains that sustain business as usual. The devastating impacts are being experienced most acutely by the world's most vulnerable communities. Poorer countries in Africa with health care systems debilitated by years of ill-conceived Western structural adjustment programs are caught between trying to implement lockdowns to save lives while staving off health infrastructure collapse, and the prospect of prolonged unemployment and food and water scarcity. The pandemic is exposing the massive structural inequalities in the global system that have remained invisible for so long.

Yet the only way forward is through.

Stay in touch, stay safe,

Thank you for your attention,

Greg Mello

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[^ back to top](#)

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# Los Alamos Study Group



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May 17, 2020

## Study Group to host public Zoom meeting Tuesday May 19, 6:00 - 7:30 pm MST; quick updates

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Dear New Mexico activist leaders –

### 1. Tuesday's meeting

The Study Group will be hosting a public Zoom meeting this coming Tuesday, May 19, from 6:00 - 7:30 pm MST.

At this meeting we will provide updates about LANL issues and answer questions submitted through Zoom's chat function. (This formality is the best we can do in a wide-open virtual setting, with hundreds invited. If it turns out that there are only a handful of people present, we may be able to ask and answer questions less formally -- we'll just have to see how many attend.)

If you don't have access to the meeting via computer you can telephone and listen but you won't be able to ask questions.

Here's the link to join the meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89129974698>

**Meeting ID: 891 2997 4698**

**Password: 863314**

If you are joining us by telephone, please dial in using one the following numbers that correspond to your general area (about 99% of those invited are in New Mexico; the TX number should work for you):

WA area: 253 215 8782

TX area: 346 248 7799

CA area: 669 900 6833

MD area: 301 715 8592

IL area: 312 626 6799

NY area: 929 436 2866

Many of you are by now quite experienced at virtual meetings of various kinds. If not, "getting your ducks in a row" technically ahead of time is a very good idea. We also have to learn new forms of etiquette ("[Zoom meeting etiquette: 15 tips and best practices for online video conference meetings](#)"). There are tons of tutorials on line, e.g. [here](#).

Please join promptly, as we will start right away. Our agenda will be more or less as follows:

The first hour (short topic introductions by Greg Mello, 7 minutes each, then Q&A, also 7 minutes):

- An overview of US nuclear weapons programs: the US nuclear arsenal and its modernization; costs, schedules, locations.
- The proposed rapid expansion of Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) for warhead core ("pit") production and warhead design: the role of LANL in specific planned nuclear weapons and therefore the critical role northern New Mexico can play in halting those weapons.
- Why we think pit production is unlikely to succeed, and why LANL is the worst place to do it. The essential and growing role of Santa Fe in enabling pit production.
- Why we think the pit mission is incompatible with national survival -- and will, sooner or later, be abandoned.

The final half hour (introduction by Lydia Clark, our Outreach Director, then Q&A):

- What we in New Mexico can do to halt this folly.

We'd like to have as much participation as possible at this and subsequent virtual meetings. If there are only a few people present we may be able to open up mics.

If there are really important questions that don't get answered in sufficient depth due to gaps in our knowledge or inadequate time we can take them up in greater depth in subsequent meetings.

We want to know how to make future meetings better, so if you have suggestions please write.

We would like to meet again rather soon, among other topics on the matter of LANL's regional economics: *what to say to people who say we need pit production, etc. because of "jobs."*

## **2. A few quick updates**

As most of you know there was recently a comment period on the Draft Supplement Analysis (DSA) to LANL's old site-wide environmental impact statement (SWEIS), addressing pit production issues only. Since it would be a little like commenting into a hole in the ground, we didn't ask you to waste your time commenting. Given the lack of any legal context, our own [comments](#) were limited to several big issues which encompass most of the dozens of specific problems we tabulated. It was important for this organization to comment despite evident federal insincerity, in order to forestall any future [laches](#) defense. As we say, and as we will discuss, much more expansion is going on at LANL than just gearing up for pit production.

For citizens it is a much better use of your time to write and publish your opinions about pit production in newspapers, on blogs, in virtual campaign meetings, or really in any (virtual) public place and manner, than to submit them to the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA).

In South Carolina (unlike here), an EIS process for pit production is underway ("[Study: Savannah River pit hub could meet national demand for nuclear weapon cores](#)," *Aiken Standard*, Apr 8, 2020). We have participated fully there and will file formal comments.

As you can begin to see from the graphic which begins this article, the Savannah River Site (SRS) has a lot of room, in every sense, for pit production. From an engineering point of view, it's a better site.

The Trump Administration originally just wanted one pit production site, not two. The notion of having two sites arose because the New Mexico Democrats saw that SRS's advantages threatened LANL's pit mission. The upshot is that now we have two sites preparing to make more than 80 pits per year *each*. Only one of these sites makes any engineering sense. Neither makes long-term policy sense -- provided the US is willing to start retiring nuclear weapon systems in the late 2030s and beyond.

As we will see, as far as pits are concerned LANL is going to be one of --

1. a "disposable" pit factory (that is something like "wasted waste", "waste squared");
2. a bigger and far more expensive pit factory than is currently admitted; or
3. a pit R&D and training facility, i.e. no pit factory at all.

Interested? Ask on Tuesday via chat, if our explanation isn't complete.

The *New Mexican* had a good article today on pit production in the Democratic primary race for Congressional District (CD) 3 ("[Plans to boost LANL pit production get mixed reactions from CD3 candidates](#)," May 16, 2020). Good, except the lede had a factual error. It said, with the mistake in italics:

Controversial plans to ramp up plutonium pit production at Los Alamos National Laboratory have drawn mixed support from candidates running for an open seat in the 3rd Congressional District — *a shift from state leaders' traditional bipartisan backing of the lab's nuclear weapons program.*

It's a mistake anybody could make who hasn't been around for a while. It has been pointed out to them. To assert a history of bipartisan support for pit production is dangerous.

In fact there was uniform bipartisan *opposition* to pit production at LANL a very short time ago. See <https://www.lasg.org/MPF2/PitProdOpposition.html>. Domenici, Bingaman, Richardson, Udall, all opposed LANL as a pit production site. None of them saw LANL as appropriate for a production mission. They all thought WIPP was a better site for such a production mission, and wrote DOE accordingly. Neither did the University of California, which ran LANL then and still partly does, want that mission.

## **3. Update on US Nuclear Weapons Modernization for the International Disarmament Community**

The above resource may be of use to you, both for the facts it draws together and the conclusions it makes. We'd have liked to make the latter clearer. We had to keep the style rather dry and some of the most important conclusions, implicit. There's a lot to discuss in the last section, especially.

## **4. Cascading, converging crises**

I hope you understand that there will be no return to "normal" "after" this pandemic. We can't see far ahead, or clearly, but at least that much is clear. The defense literature is rife with statements of fear that military budgets may not be supported going forward, as indeed they may not be.

*realistically*

To meet and seize the day, it is important that we not be cowed but rather be very ambitious, ambitious, and to make plans based on those ambitions. At the same time we notice that everything takes longer!

It's a tremendously important inflection point in narrative, politics, economics, and society. It's also horrible, and more attention is going into basic security and safety needs in our own community. People are hunkering down into intellectually and emotionally safe groups.

Views are changing. There are new possibilities.

Stay in touch, stay safe,

Thank you for your attention,

Greg Mello

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[^ back to top](#)

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May 12, 2020

## **Santa Fe Midtown Project virtual meeting today 5-7 pm; the City will take questions for possible use if sent pronto; background**

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### **Dear New Mexico activist leaders –**

Good morning. We hope everybody is well and happy, despite the overall situation. Please stay safe.

We've been quite busy in the office, mostly on projects with national and international audiences; there's been little to add to our previous letters. We will make some of that work available before long.

So busy in fact that were it not for today's editorial in the *New Mexican* we would have forgotten about today's virtual meeting with the new Midtown developer, which will apparently be live today from 5 to 7 pm on the City's [YouTube channel](#).

It is ludicrously late but if you want to send questions to the City by 1:00 pm, send them to [info@midtowndistrictsantafe.com](mailto:info@midtowndistrictsantafe.com). Sorry about that.

I have taken the liberty of pasting some recent articles below in their entirety by way of background.

We have many concerns about Midtown but our primary one has to do with the possible role of Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) and its federal parent the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) in this development, either directly or through some of the educational institutions mentioned below.

Especially in trying economic times developers may seek an anchor commercial tenant that could also bring "market-rate" residential customers. Some think LANL could be that.

From documents obtained from the City we know there have been private meetings between LANL, NNSA, Sandia National Laboratory, and other major corporate actors and developers with Mayor Webber and others regarding projects of mutual interest, at Midtown and elsewhere -- off NM599, specifically.

This "LANL overflow" is all about the truly massive effort to prepare LANL for a large pit production mission involving about 4,000 people, with 24/7 operations. I will spare you new details about this for now.

There are starting to be fresh calls for new national security priorities, a constant refrain from us for the past 31 years. This is excellent; it is a fertile time. But they must be concrete. Here in New Mexico we have a superior way to make those visions real.

More soon, thank you for your attention,

Greg Mello

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[https://www.santafenewmexican.com/opinion/editorials/speak-up-about-midtown-campus-plan/article\\_7a89b3ae-93ba-11ea-a65c-ff16ddbaf007.html](https://www.santafenewmexican.com/opinion/editorials/speak-up-about-midtown-campus-plan/article_7a89b3ae-93ba-11ea-a65c-ff16ddbaf007.html)

### **Speak up about midtown campus plan**

*The New Mexican*, May 11, 2020 Updated 6 hrs ago

For all the residents of Santa Fe who have expressed interest in the redevelopment of the midtown campus — whether how a master developer was chosen or what will be built at the site, the time to pay attention for the future is now.

On Tuesday, May 12, a virtual meeting to hear from the development team is scheduled from 5 to 7 p.m. on the city of Santa Fe's YouTube channel.

Questions can be submitted before the meeting by 1 p.m., using the address [info@midtowndistrictsantafe.com](mailto:info@midtowndistrictsantafe.com).

So don't be shy. Ask away.

Last week, the City Council voted 7-2 to affirm the choice of KDC Real Estate Development & Investments/Cienda Partners, a somewhat controversial choice for two reasons. First, locals tend to worry about out-of-state developers — and this is a Texas group, no less!

Second, critics — we have been among them — were concerned the process in choosing the master developer was overly secretive. (In fact, a complaint has been filed with the Attorney General's office by a group of citizens unhappy with the process; we'll be watching to see what happens there.)

For now, a choice has been made. It's important that both individuals and groups take part in what happens next. We'd encourage people to watch the presentation — it offers encouragement about possibilities for this chunk of real estate. (Watch the video at <https://bit.ly/2zqp8vp>.)

All that exists right now is potential. That's why public engagement matters. The city has signed an exclusive negotiation agreement with a master developer; over the next months will come the creation of a development plan.

There's a hint of possibilities in initial presentations from KDC and the contributions of its many local partners. This will be a lengthy process with many opportunities for people to weigh in.

Partners working with the developers are all Santa Fe-based, including some of the more respected nonprofits in town. They are invested in the idea of making the midtown area a place to live, work and play. That partners well with what residents have said they want — using the 64-acre site as a place for housing, social services, education, arts and entertainment, and other activities that serve the public.

Residents have made it clear they want a midtown center that helps revive nearby neighborhoods without gentrifying the area to the point that people are forced out. The proposed development as outlined focuses on mixed-income affordable housing, multimedia and film studio expansion, along with areas for recreation and space for arts and cultural events. All were listed as important to residents who assisted with the initial discussions.

In the proposal being developed, the University of New Mexico and Santa Fe Community College are in the mix to ensure higher education will continue at the site. There is emphasis on the health of the community, with YouthWorks and Christus St. Vincent also signed on as partners. Other collaborators include Homewise, Yes Housing, the Santa Fe Art Institute, and a host of local organizations, companies and businesses.

Christus CEO Lillian Montoya said in a video introducing the proposal, "If you start with the right people and the right project, you come out of the gate really fast." She said Christus envisions offering primary care services, partnering with educational institutions to offer training and working with Homewise to provide homebuying and rental opportunities for its employees.

Given the lagging economic climate because of the plummeting price of oil and business shutdowns caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the prospect of developing a chunk of Santa Fe into a center that offers jobs, education and housing is one our city can't afford to get wrong.

For that to happen, residents must get involved now — not in a year or two after decisions are set in stone. This is no time to sit on the sidelines.

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[https://www.santafenewmexican.com/news/local\\_news/eight-people-infected-with-covid-19-among-those-housed-at-midtown-campus/article\\_2aade53c-9395-11ea-9685-0bc6cd031be7.html](https://www.santafenewmexican.com/news/local_news/eight-people-infected-with-covid-19-among-those-housed-at-midtown-campus/article_2aade53c-9395-11ea-9685-0bc6cd031be7.html)

### **Eight people infected with COVID-19 among those housed at midtown campus**

By Daniel J. Chacón [dchacon@sfnewmexican.com](mailto:dchacon@sfnewmexican.com) May 11, 2020 Updated 4 hrs ago

The city of Santa Fe worked relentlessly in March to transform what was then a mostly vacant midtown campus into an emergency shelter, primarily to try to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus among the homeless.

So far, the plan has worked, and now the campus is serving as a backup for hospitals and other facilities and providing housing for eight people who were recently transferred there after testing positive for COVID-19.

"The shelter has been operating so well that I think Christus [St. Vincent Regional Medical Center] and [the New Mexico Department of Health] have been looking for a way to use it as a fallback resource," Mayor Alan Webber said Monday during a virtual news conference.

"As the other parts of the caring network need a relief valve, that space is now a relief valve," he added.

The campus is currently housing 43 people.

The city's public works director, Regina Wheeler, who has been serving as Santa Fe's emergency operations incident commander for nearly two

months, said none of the eight people infected with the contagious disease was admitted under the original process established by the city.

“You know how we’re taking homeless people that are screened from the shelters and are at risk on the streets and testing them? All the people that we’ve gotten that way are negative,” she said. “The way that I get my COVID positives are from the Department of Health or Buffalo Thunder or Christus St. Vincent. They have a COVID-positive person, and they seek some place to shelter them.”

Wheeler said people who have tested positive for COVID-19 are being housed at the shelter for various reasons.

“A big one is that Buffalo Thunder isn’t allowing oxygen in the rooms,” she said, referring to the casino and resort north of Santa Fe that is serving as a self-isolation site for New Mexico tribal members.

Webber called the emergency shelter at the old College of Santa Fe campus on St. Michael’s Drive “a national example of a remarkable achievement.”

While the city established the emergency shelter primarily for homeless people as it tried to alleviate overcrowding at homeless shelters, which one official called a “potential tinderbox” for the spread of the virus, it always envisioned housing other groups of people there, including health care workers who test positive for the coronavirus and might need a place to stay and be monitored medically.

But most of the residents up to this point have been homeless people.

“Starting Tuesday, [Albuquerque] Health Care for the Homeless will be running a clinic for the people there,” Webber said.

Webber said the emergency shelter is safe to visit, though he didn’t say whether he has been on the campus himself.

“There is a way to wear a mask and gloves and go check it out,” he said.

The emergency shelter is providing other benefits to homeless people in Santa Fe besides a roof over their heads and what the mayor said were “three square meals a day.”

“People are actually getting their lives together because they finally have a safe place to live and wraparound services,” Webber said.

The midtown campus, which the city is eyeing for redevelopment, started housing people on a temporary and emergency basis March 28.

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[https://www.santafenewmexican.com/news/local\\_news/master-developer-for-midtown-campus-builds-entirely-local-team/article\\_cf77dc98-93b9-11ea-9a34-dbe870f7dbbb.html](https://www.santafenewmexican.com/news/local_news/master-developer-for-midtown-campus-builds-entirely-local-team/article_cf77dc98-93b9-11ea-9a34-dbe870f7dbbb.html)

### **Master developer for midtown campus builds entirely local team**

By Teya Vitu [tvitu@sfnewmexican.com](mailto:tvitu@sfnewmexican.com) May 11, 2020 Updated 4 hrs ago

The firm negotiating with the city of Santa Fe to redevelop the midtown campus is based in Dallas, but there’s New Mexico flavor galore.

And in fact, it may have been a loose-knit but heavily local push that reeled in KDC Real Estate Development & Investment/Cienda Partners to take on the massive project in an alliance that will include 17 different New Mexico partners.

The City Council last week selected the Texas firm as master developer of the city-owned, 64-acre property on St. Michael’s Drive. The city and KDC/Cienda will now enter into exclusive negotiations that could last as long as 16 months, followed by at least 10 years of construction.

After the council vote May 4, the firm outlined its vision for the onetime college campus, a proposal that includes housing, health care, education, film production and other components.

“I would say our vision is 90 percent from our” Santa Fe team, said Bill Guthrey, KDC’s senior vice president of land development. “We help each of our partners realize their vision.”

Some of the team members hoping for a significant presence on the property are the University of New Mexico, Santa Fe Community College and the Higher Education Center; Santa Fe youth job-training and advocacy group YouthWorks; Christus St. Vincent Regional Medical Center; Santa Fe-based housing nonprofit Homewise; Albuquerque nonprofit Yes Housing; and Pacifica Ventures, a film production firm that plans to add four to six sound studios on the campus.

Late last summer, a group of Santa Fe organizations, including many working on the project now, was searching for a potential master developer to lead their development proposal before submissions were due to the city in October.

Actor-director Justin Golding and Sage Morris-Greene, general manager of the Santa Fe business brokerage Sam Goldenberg & Associate, brought the team together, and Jay Grab, an associate broker at Phase One Realty, called a commercial broker friend in Dallas seeking

suggestions for a firm with the ability to make the project happen.

The friend suggested KDC.

“When we talked to [KDC], they got very excited,” Grab said. “They were out here within two days to take a look at the site. ... We needed to find someone who had the capability to pull off a project of this magnitude in this city.”

Other members of the team reached out to Cienda Partners, said James Feild, senior vice president of Cienda. “We were getting calls,” he said.

KDC and Cienda quickly became 50/50 partners.

Developers rarely see ready-made teams approach them at the beginning, Guthrey and Feild said.

“It’s extremely unique,” Guthrey said. “It’s what made it so compelling. To start with medical, education, film studios and a range of housing is remarkable. Each of the partners has a very specific idea from the outset what their requirements are. We have pieces and parts and are able to drop them into a conceptual plan.”

KDC and Cienda Partners both have prior connections in Santa Fe.

Cienda Partners owns La Fonda on the Plaza, where it has spent more than \$14 million in renovations since 2014. It also owned, remodeled and sold the El Rey Court to a partner and is the developer of Las Campanas.

Guthrey, KDC’s point man for the midtown campus, owns a home in Santa Fe, grew up in El Paso, and his father grew up in Silver City and graduated from UNM.

At this stage, Feild said, Cienda is scoping out which buildings will remain on the midtown campus. It also is focusing on housing development and the public-private partnership with the city.

KDC is taking charge of infrastructure and commercial development.

“My goal is to get the film school up and running as fast as possible,” in collaboration with UNM, SFCC and the Higher Education Center, Feild said. “... We have infrastructure that is 60 years old.”

Affordable housing could be an early player, too.

“We don’t really know what the mix needs to be, but we got the clear message we need affordable housing,” Feild said. “Our approach is to work with the community. What and how much does the mix need to be? ... There’s not a magic bullet.”

He added, “We want a cool place where you can minimize the car. We want a combination of local and regional productions at the [Greer] Garson Theater. We want to make sure to broaden out the Fogelson Library to the public library system. We want to turn that into a state-of-the-art library.

“I don’t know where I’m going with this,” he added, “but the arts have got to be important.”

“We’re talking about something that has longevity and resilience,” Guthrey said. “That’s what everybody is signing into: the bigger picture.”

KDC/Cienda is getting started on the project in an uncertain time, as the economic effects of the novel coronavirus pandemic take aim at a range of businesses.

“These are unprecedented times,” Guthrey said. “We are going into this with eyes wide open.”

Especially with the pandemic-related shutdown and its economic toll, Feild said, “everything is up in the air” in terms of the projected costs for the redevelopment and the time line for construction.

“What I can say is we are looking at this as a career capper for most of us,” he said. “I think it’s a 10- to 15-year build-out. Several hundred million [dollars] is not out of the question.”

The KDC/Cienda Partners team

Dallas-based KDC Real Estate Development & Investments/Cienda Partners assembled an all-New Mexico team to build its midtown campus proposal

- University of New Mexico
- Santa Fe Community College



- Higher Education Center
- YouthWorks
- Christus St. Vincent Health System
- La Fonda on the Plaza
- Homewise
- Yes Housing
- Aberg Property Company
- Hogan Group
- Autototoph Design
- Pacifica Ventures
- Justin Golding
- Phase One Realty
- Santa Fe Art Institute
- Sage Morris-Greene
- Stantec

Meet the developer

KDC Real Estate Development & Investments/Cienda Partners and the city of Santa Fe are gathering public input on plans for redevelopment of the midtown campus, a city-owned former college campus on St. Michael's Drive.

The process continues with a Meet the Developer public virtual session from 5 to 7 p.m. Tuesday on the city's YouTube channel. The public is invited to submit questions through 1 p.m. Tuesday to the development team at [info@midtowndistrictsantafe.com](mailto:info@midtowndistrictsantafe.com).

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[https://www.santafenewmexican.com/news/local\\_news/santa-fe-taps-dallas-developer-for-midtown-campus/article\\_e275ed78-8a57-11ea-800b-53954a8ce19a.html](https://www.santafenewmexican.com/news/local_news/santa-fe-taps-dallas-developer-for-midtown-campus/article_e275ed78-8a57-11ea-800b-53954a8ce19a.html)

### **Santa Fe taps Dallas developer for midtown campus**

By Teya Vitu [tvitu@sfnewmexican.com](mailto:tvitu@sfnewmexican.com) May 4, 2020 Updated 6 hrs ago

The cat is finally out of the bag for the city of Santa Fe's midtown campus.

Dallas-based KDC Real Estate Development & Investments/Cienda Partners — the presumptive master developer of the 64-acre property on St. Michael's Drive following a City Council vote late Monday — outlined its plan to build affordable housing, add numerous film studios and collaborate with the University of New Mexico, Santa Fe Community College, YouthWorks and Christus St. Vincent Regional Medical Center on what is expected to be a yearslong project at the site.

The City Council and Mayor Alan Webber voted 7-2 during a special meeting Monday to enter into an exclusive negotiation agreement with the firm after three hours of fiery debate.

Several councilors expressed concern they didn't have adequate time to review the agreement with KDC/Cienda before casting a vote and that the selection process for the master developer lacked public involvement. Some said they received dozens of comments and questions from the public just an hour before the meeting and wanted to address them before making the deal official.

Councilors JoAnne Vigil Coppler and Renee Villarreal voted against the agreement.

"I am very disillusioned with the lack of public input," Vigil Coppler said. "... The public has been terribly left out. I didn't know we had 70 questions [from the public] because we just got them. This is a major decision. This whole thing seems to be very rushed."

Councilor Michael Garcia approved the agreement but said he thought the process established by Webber and the city's contracted midtown campus manager, Daniel Hernandez, to select a master developer was shrouded in secrecy.

"We got a lot of questions submitted to us," Garcia said. "I think we should answer those questions prior to a vote."

Villarreal agreed. "These are questions I would have liked to hear," she said. "The fact we received these an hour before the meeting — it's hard to sift through them."

Vigil Coppler also noted councilors did not get copies of the agreement until the night before the special meeting.

The agreement between the city and KDC/Cienda calls for a 12-month negotiation period with a built-in, four-month extension due to the novel coronavirus pandemic. Either party can terminate negotiations after six months if they decide there is no likelihood of reaching a disposition and development agreement for the former college campus.

Neither KDC/Cienda nor the city had given any indication until Monday what the Dallas team intended for the midtown campus. Officials had cited the competitive sealed procurement process.

The firm introduced its

Santa Fe-based team with a 20-minute video laying out the basic vision.

Homewise, a major developer of affordable housing in Santa Fe

and Albuquerque, would coordinate the housing component of the redevelopment.

Mike Loftin, CEO of the nonprofit Homewise, said affordable housing would play a key role in the project — but not the only role.

"We will have a housing component that addresses the whole spectrum from affordable to high end and everything in between," Loftin said, adding there would be ownership opportunities and rentals, along with housing incorporated into mixed-use structures.

Coppler Vigil was critical of the variety of housing proposed.

"We need affordable housing," she said. "I will not support any measure for market housing. That defeats the whole purpose."

Garson Studios, a filmmaking venue on the campus, would be significantly expanded with four to six more sound studios developed by Pacifica Ventures. The firm built and operated Albuquerque Studios until 2018, when it sold the property to Netflix.

Christus St. Vincent plans to add a primary care clinic at the campus for residents of the community and the surrounding neighborhoods, CEO Lillian Montoya said in the video.

YouthWorks, a local nonprofit that offers job training, counseling and other support services for young people, would have a community kitchen on the campus and help with workforce development, CEO Melynn Schuyler said.

Bill Guthrey, KDC's senior vice president of land development, said the company sought to partner with the largest educational institutions, the largest affordable housing provider and the largest health care provider in Santa Fe.

While KDC is based in Dallas, Guthrey said he has a second home in Santa Fe and grew up in El Paso. His father was from Silver City, he said.

Cienda Partners owns La Fonda on the Plaza.

The Monday presentation by KDC/Cienda was the first of several planned "Meet the Developer" sessions.

The first of four more virtual sessions is scheduled May 12. Each session will address a specific set of topics: housing and housing affordability; transportation and connectivity; job creation, career training and job placement; sustainable sites and green building; master planning and urban design.

The nonprofit social justice organization Chainbreaker Collective monitored Monday's meeting on YouTube.

"Chainbreaker has been conducting community engagement around this issue since the beginning," Director Tomás Rivera said. "We are looking forward to sharing our experience, expertise and working with the city as they honor the commitments they made tonight to ensure meaningful community engagement."

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[https://www.santafenewmexican.com/news/local\\_news/santa-fe-residents-file-complaint-threaten-suit-over-midtown-campus-project-secrecy/article\\_ab4a5d5a-8e0f-11ea-8784-af9f94f57bb0.html](https://www.santafenewmexican.com/news/local_news/santa-fe-residents-file-complaint-threaten-suit-over-midtown-campus-project-secrecy/article_ab4a5d5a-8e0f-11ea-8784-af9f94f57bb0.html)

## **Santa Fe residents file complaint, threaten suit over midtown campus project secrecy**

By Danielle Prokop [dprokop@sfnewmexican.com](mailto:dprokop@sfnewmexican.com) May 4, 2020 Updated 6 hrs ago

A group of Santa Fe residents have filed a complaint with the New Mexico Attorney General's Office accusing the city of violating the state's open meetings law in its process of selecting a developer for the midtown campus.

"We didn't need to see names, we didn't need to see bottom lines," retired schoolteacher María Bautista said in an interview Monday. "We wanted to see ideas, and they locked us out."

Bautista announced the complaint in a Facebook post Monday, hours before the City Council was set to take a big step forward in what is expected to be a yearslong, massive redevelopment of the city-owned property on St. Michael's Drive.

In a virtual public meeting Monday evening that drew comments from dozens of people, the council voted to hire Dallas-based KDC Real Estate Development & Investments/Cienda Partners as the master developer of the former college.

Bautista said she filed the complaint in a joint effort with Miguel Chavez, a former city councilor and county commissioner; former employees of the shuttered college; and other residents of the surrounding neighborhood.

She and her attorney, A. Blair Dunn, also expect to file a lawsuit against the city, asking a judge to order officials to roll back any actions on the project until they gather more public input on its scope and developer, she said.

Matt Baca, a spokesman for Attorney General Hector Balderas, confirmed the office had received the complaint.

Bautista sent an email to the city last week expressing her concerns.

City Attorney Erin McSherry responded, saying the City Council has taken no votes behind closed doors and that all discussions on the midtown project followed the open meetings law.

"Procurement Code requires that discussion of competitive sealed proposals, such as those submitted regarding the Midtown Property, occur during executive session, so that other competing proposers do not have access to their competition's proposal during the negotiation process," McSherry wrote.

Bautista still believes some decisions were made in closed-door meetings.

She noted the city had narrowed its list of possible developers to two finalists from 21 contenders between November and Monday.

"What they've missed is they can't have these closed-door meetings to whittle down the developers," Dunn said.

Webber said in teleconference Monday he was unaware a complaint had been filed with the Attorney General's Office.

But Webber defended the selection process for the master developer when asked if he thought there was enough community engagement to meet the public's expectations. He acknowledged there was "enormous appetite for engagement" in what he called a landmark, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

"I think that the process the city embarked on, which is essentially an RFP process — a request for proposal process — is not a process that is involving public participation," he said.

"It's not a political process any more than any other contract the city lets is a political process."

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<https://www.abqjournal.com/1451288/redevelopment-of-santa-fes-midtown-site-moves-ahead.html>

## **Redevelopment of Santa Fe's Midtown site moves ahead**

By Monica Roman Gagnier / Journal staff writer

Published: Monday, May 4th, 2020 at 11:09pm

Updated: Tuesday, May 5th, 2020 at 12:05am

The Santa Fe City Council approved a one-year exclusive negotiating agreement with KDC Real Estate Development and Investments/Cienda Partners to develop the 64-acre Midtown property during a special meeting on Monday. This photo from September shows weeds growing in the sidewalk outside Lasalle Hall on the campus that once housed the Santa Fe University of Art and Design.

SANTA FE, N.M. — The city of Santa Fe governing body, which includes Mayor Alan Webber and the eight-member city council, voted Monday to enter a one-year contract with a master developer for the city-owned Midtown site, the former home of the Santa Fe University of Art and Design.

Under the terms of the exclusive negotiating agreement, KDC Real Estate Development and Investments/Cienda Partners' plans and local partnerships will be made public. As the city has sought to find a master developer for the 64-acre property off St. Michael's Drive, it has faced criticism for keeping private the responses to its request for expressions of interest in the site.

The only two opposing votes to the one-year "get to know you" deal came from city councilors Renee Villareal and JoAnne Vigil Coppler. Both expressed concern that public input had not been sufficient during the search for a master developer.

"I want the public to know we don't know hardly more than they do," said Vigil Coppler during the special meeting, which took place via the Zoom digital platform because of restrictions against public gatherings during the coronavirus crisis. "Everything has been so confidential. This whole thing bothers me to no end, but here we are."

The Midtown site is in District 4, which Vigil Coppler represents.

After the vote, the principals of KDC and Cienda showed a video that introduced the council and the public to its local partners. Under the mixed-use development envisioned, Christus St. Vincent, Homewise, Santa Fe Community College, the University of New Mexico and Pacifica Ventures, the former owner of Albuquerque Studios, will be tenants or possibly buyers of parcels on the site.

Under the ambitious plan, the Midtown campus would have health care facilities from Christus that would be used to train surgical technicians through a program at SFCC. Homewise would work to create housing for both rental and lease at a variety of price points. SFCC would partner with UNM to create degree programs to train students for digital and film careers.

The opportunity to revitalize the campus in the heart of the city was hailed by Mayor Webber as "a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."

The big question mark is coronavirus, which could prevent surveys and inspections from taking place and even limit the ability of local residents to comment on the proposal. The fallout from the virus could also hurt business.

The contract calls for a four-month extension and could be extended further if shutdowns prevent work from occurring, said City Attorney Erin McSherry.

The presence of SFCC and UNM at the Midtown site would continue the tradition of education on the campus that dates back to 1859, when St. Michael's College, later known as the College of Santa Fe, was founded. After the school ran into financial trouble, the city of Santa Fe bought the campus in 2009 in conjunction with the state of New Mexico and Laureate Education.

The school reopened as the Santa Fe University of Art and Design, but closed in May 2018, also because of financial woes.

Councilor Signe Lindell reminded some of her colleagues who were advocating a go-slow approach that the empty facility is a burden on city finances, which have taken a hit due to the loss of tourism.

"In the last six weeks, we have witnessed a worldwide economic meltdown. This property costs between \$6,000 and \$8,000 a day. That's a lot of money folks. Let's make this happen as quickly as possible," she said prior to the vote.

The city will hold a virtual meeting on Tuesday, May 12, to solicit questions and comments from the public about its new relationship with the master developer.



# Los Alamos Study Group



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April 7, 2020

**If you don't want plutonium pit production you will need to speak up. We provide a powerful way.**

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Our blog (makeover in progress): [Remember your Humanity](#). Twitter: [@TrishABQ](#).

[Contribute](#). Volunteer. Contact us ([Greg, Trish, and Michelle in our main office](#), [Lydia Clark in our Santa Fe office](#))

**Dear New Mexico activist leaders –**

*Right now, liberals and progressives in New Mexico are effectively "on record" as supporting a new Rocky Flats Plant for producing plutonium warhead cores ("pits") near Santa Fe.*

This mission involves:

- the transport of tons of plutonium to and from Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL);
- the processing and storage of plutonium;
- processing, storage, transportation, and disposal of nuclear and chemical wastes;
- 24/7 operations;
- commuting and housing to support 4,000 pit-related workers (LANL's figure, not ours);
- construction of support infrastructure; and
- before long, construction of dedicated new production facilities.

*How so? Why are liberals and progressives "on record" supporting this?*

Because this factory is very much a New Mexico Democratic Party priority. Senators Heinrich and Udall have very actively supported this factory, as did our Governor when she was a congresswoman, as has Congressman Ben Ray Lujan, now a senatorial candidate.

Unless liberals and progressives find a way to *effectively* and *publicly* register their disagreement on this issue, they are effectively silent. That silence is not just *taken as political assent*. *It is political assent.*

A LANL pit factory was not a Trump Administration priority until the New Mexico congressional delegation made it one.

Not resting on their laurels, both New Mexico senators want LANL to be the ONLY pit factory. They want the entire mission for LANL, now and always.

How big of a factory? Just a "little" one, in the existing plutonium facility?

Here's the first part of your answer: Last year, Senator Heinrich successfully co-sponsored an amendment with Senator Lindsay Graham to make the Trump Administration's pit requirement -- to be producing at least 80 "war reserve" pits per year by 2030 -- a law.

Small? No.

Here's the second part of the answer: LANL's old, smallish, built-for-R&D, unsafe plutonium facility, built on a narrow, soft mesa with high seismic risk, won't support 24/7 production for long -- if ever. All parties know that. An industrial pit mission requires industrial facilities. When the political dust settles, LANL would need a dedicated new production facility for this mission. Almost every task which was done at the Rocky Flats Plant would also have to be done at LANL. Tasks require people and buildings -- a lot of them. This is not a "small" mission. It's a huge, transformative mission not just for LANL but for the region.

Some of you helped us fight off this mission for four decades. We have won again and again. But now there is mostly silence.

Just 15 years ago, senators Domenici and Bingaman, Governor Richardson, and Congressman Udall all [agreed that LANL should not do this](#). Now our entire congressional delegation, and as far as we know the Democratic Governor, want LANL to have this mission.

The silence is deafening.

## What we would like you to do

In the present pandemic all of us are encountering new pressures of many kinds, even as we seek practical political solutions while largely physically isolated.

Right now, the Los Alamos Study Group is responding to these conditions and others -- including the *quite specific nuclear assault on northern New Mexico described above* -- with the [Call for Sanity, Not Nuclear Production](#).

This Call is a manifesto and rallying point for collective engagement by businesses, organizations and churches. It is not a petition.

*Your role is crucial! We need your help to recruit business and organizational endorsers. This can be fairly easily done, without physical proximity.* (We don't like the term "social distancing." A better watchword is: "Physical separation, social unity.")

If we want new priorities for New Mexico, there is no better time to ask for them than right now.

Here's how to do it:

1. Read the [Call](#) and supporting short background (on the same page).
2. Jot down a short list of businesses and organizations you think might endorse the Call. This is your starting call and email list.
3. Compose a short script you can use if you have to leave a phone message. Here's an example:

Hello my name is \_\_\_\_\_.

I am calling to encourage [business or organization name] to endorse the Los Alamos Study Group's "Call for Sanity, Not Nuclear Production." It's posted at lasg.org in the red "Take Action" box, right at the top of the [home page](#).

It is a critically important time to express our community's resolve in the face of the Los Alamos Lab's proposed expansion, primarily for production of plutonium warhead cores ("pits").

As you may know there's also a possible expansion of LANL into the City of Santa Fe, indirectly supporting pit production.

The Study Group currently has two resolutions opposing these actions before Santa Fe's City Council.

If opposing pit production is something you support, please visit our website (lasg.org) and fill out the business endorsement form online.

It takes just a minute. With enough businesses and organizations, it will definitely make an impact. Don't forget to hit the final "Submit" button! (They will get a confirmatory email.)

Thank you!

4. Keep a record of who you have called and their responses. Tell us how you are doing by phone (505-265-1200) or [email](#). Contact us if you have questions or problems!
5. Ask interested businesses and organizations you speak to if they would like to help with outreach for this Call.
6. We will soon post a list of endorsing businesses and organizations. Your contacts will be able to see those too.
7. Interested businesses and organizations can take further actions right now. They can:
  - Write letters to editors (LTEs) for different security priorities, opposing pit production, opposing LANL in Midtown, etc. You can draw talking points from our [letters](#) and [bulletins](#). This [primer](#) may be helpful. An LTE campaign [can be very, very powerful](#) and is "easy" to do during a pandemic -- as easy as anything is right now.
  - Write letters to Santa Fe city councilors asking them to introduce and endorse our two city council resolutions. [One](#) calls for a LANL Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement (SWEIS); the [other](#) opposes any LANL presence in the Santa Fe Midtown project and prohibits City contracts with nuclear weapons agencies and prime contractors.

In 1994, we brought together 60 organizations and tribes to ask for a LANL SWEIS. We got one, with extra hearings and eventually, a Record of Decision limiting LANL pit production to a maximum of 20 pits per year, which LANL has never come close to.

In 2005, hundreds of businesses, organizations, and churches joined the [Call for Nuclear Disarmament](#), upon which the current Call is based. Not coincidentally, in 2008 the 20 pit per year limit was reiterated by DOE. Public, local government, and tribal engagement on these issues has created a three-decade social contract that has limited pit production at LANL, which has averaged only about 1 pit per year. We have explained many times why pit production has not been, and is not now, "necessary" in any sense. It is a crucial foundation for a vast nuclear arms enterprise that embodies inverted national security priorities.

Thank you. We look forward to hearing from you.

Greg, Trish, Michelle, and Lydia, for the Study Group



# Los Alamos Study Group

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March 26, 2020

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## **A wakeup call for new priorities; Call for Sanity, not Nuclear Production; Santa Fe Midtown -- calls and letters needed ASAP**

### **Suggested actions:**

1. **[Call for Sanity](#): help us recruit businesses, organizations, and religious communities.**
2. **As discussed below, write or call Santa Fe city councilors, if you live there, and recruit others to do so.**
3. **Write letters to editors; they are effective.**
4. **Please help us recruit other activist leaders; they can subscribe to this list by sending a blank email [here](#).**

### **Dear New Mexico activist leaders –**

#### **1. Our country desperately needs new, humane priorities. Now is the time to push for them.**

The COVID-19 (CV) pandemic has created difficulties, distractions, and dangers for all of us.

There are also opportunities. Jean Nichols of Penasco rightly reminds us we can and should treat COVID-19 as a [wakeup call](#).

This pandemic is re-making our world, more than any of us can fully grasp.

Watching part of last night's Santa Fe City Council on-line, we had the distinct impression that City leaders are in denial about the gravity of the present crisis. After the pandemic -- and when will that be? -- will the economic and social life of the state and City return to some approximation of "business as usual?"

In a word, no.

CV cases and deaths in the US are still rising exponentially, [doubling every 2-3 days](#) (see the straight line on a logarithmic scale). Total US cases have surpassed all other countries. Cases and deaths worldwide are rising exponentially, with horrific spread into crowded refugee camps and slums yet to come. There are likely to be life-threatening economic consequences to come for much of the world. We pray that the toll of death and destruction is as low as possible, but it is difficult to escape the conclusion that at a minimum, millions of individual people -- real people with families and communities and aspirations and brave hearts -- will die.

How many will die in our own country, state, and city depends on the actions we collectively take. In this regard, we felt we had to write the Governor about [what we thought would be a normative framework for COVID-19 epidemiological response](#): test widely, trace thoroughly, isolate cases and clusters, and aim at *preventing every case*, not "flattening the curve." You will see a very good explanation of that policy in Tomas Pueyo's article [here](#). If you follow the link provided to an [interactive epidemic model](#) you can experiment with different policies.

The medical aspects of CV are just the beginning of the changes at hand. The US financial and economic system is being deeply challenged, as it is in almost every country at this point. Predictions of the depth and duration of the present US economic decline vary. We think our economy was very sick to begin with, and much of the value being destroyed was notional in the first place. It is not coming back.

As is obvious to all, the current collapse of demand for oil is crushing shale producers, which on average made no net money anyway. Cash was certainly extracted (entering the New Mexico economy, sure enough) but on balance it was mostly borrowed by the upstream producers. Prices are now too long, and will be low too long, to drill and complete hundreds of new wells that will lose money. Shale production will peak and decline. Worldwide, existing fields deplete about 6% per year. US shale oil was tipping the balance toward net growth. Even before CV, world production of crude oil peaked in late 2018. That peak is now going to be permanent.

Why is this important? Because even though we can "print" notional money, it takes actual energy to produce real goods and services. A fairly constant fraction of the energy needed has to be in the form of oil. There are no immediate substitutes. Transportation, mining, farming all depend

on oil. Batteries won't cut it even if we had them. The energy density is too low.

The upshot is the prosperity, which we might crudely define as goods and services per capita, is going to decline, even if a CV cure is found tomorrow.

Basically CV has pricked the balloon of our false prosperity. It has kicked us off the knife-edge we were on.

Will carefree travelers roam the world, thronging into crowded venues in Santa Fe like they used to do? It is fairly doubtful. When the dust settles -- and we have no idea when that will be or whether the people formerly known by our names will be in that dust -- will tourism still be a bonanza for New Mexico? What about movies?

The point is, we are entering a brave new world -- at least, it had better be brave -- the values, narratives, and operating terms of which are being negotiated right now, with or without us.

As Bansky put it in a classic graffiti, "[Sorry -- the lifestyle you ordered is currently out of stock.](#)"

Will we have *more* disaster capitalism, or less? *More* military-industrial-intelligence domination, or *less*?

[Joe Lauria](#):

"Nobody in their wildest dreams would have thought we would need tens of thousands of ventilators," Trump said. But the Pentagon's wildest dreams of 11 aircraft carriers, 65 attack submarines, 65 destroyers, 104 B-1 bombers, 744 B-52 bombers, 8,848 M1 Abrams tanks, 6,724 Bradley Fighting Vehicles and 1018 F-16 fighter jets have for years come true.

The U.S. can afford to build the greatest arsenal ever known to fight two major wars at once while scrambling to produce hospital gowns, surgical masks and hand sanitizer. All of America's mighty "defenses" could not defend the nation against the humblest of things put upon the earth.

The United States prepared for the wrong war.

**A trillion dollars a year is spent on the military and nuclear weapons when America has no real armed enemies. Instead the U.S. is an enemy to nations that seek to impede its dominance by protecting their own sovereign interests.**

**There would be virtually no public support for this spending if the American people understood the U.S. as an offensive force. So the targets of its dominance must be portrayed at every turn as the menace. When Russia, for instance, defends its interests in Ukraine or on its borders against NATO troop deployments, the aggressive U.S. role is cloaked by government and the media, while the Russian response is branded a threat.** (emphasis added)

Nuclear weapons are a key enabler of US offensive forces and wars worldwide. They provide the ultimate threat that "deters" defense against our expeditionary forces. If "detering" attack on the US itself by some "evil empire" were actually the objective, the US would have a small nuclear "monad" like the UK and France.

There are a lot of people in New Mexico, some of whom call themselves liberals or "progressives," who think Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) is engaged in some kind of "nuclear deterrence" mission that keeps "America" safe. *Earth to propaganda victims: wake up.*

LANL has a new [tag line](#): "*Delivering science and technology to protect our nation and promote world stability.*" Wow. Orwell wrote *1984* as a *warning*, not an *instruction manual*.

Many liberals think the "jobs" that come from the world's most monstrous military machine are somehow "good" for New Mexico, despite 75 years of social and economic data otherwise. They see the hand of the labs -- the whip hand -- with a few dollars in it, but they don't see the other hand in our back pockets, looting the money that should have gone to community needs.

They think maybe "tech transfer" will produce "jobs" for Santa Feans at the Midtown Campus, even though that has never really happened to any significant extent before. *As if* the cost to our souls would be worth it in the first place.

## **2. The Call for Sanity, not Nuclear Production**

This [Call](#) is not a petition. It is a league of solidarity among business and civic leaders, which you (we hope) will help us bring to powerful life. Please help us recruit endorsers!

This Call is not for individuals. We encourage individuals to recruit businesses and organizations to join this Call.

After endorsing this Call, we hope businesses and organizations will make their voices heard by calling or writing elected officials and in other ways.

We want *everyone* -- individuals, businesses, organizations, churches -- to [write letters to editors \(LTEs\) and guest editorials](#).

Nearly all our elected officials either support expanded nuclear weapons or are passive. They support federal priorities that fatten the nuclear-military-industrial-intelligence complex. They won't change until politically forced to do so.



We will post a list of endorsers when we have the first 100. *Please help us reach this first target!* [These businesses and organizations](#) are a good place to start.

### **3. Midtown: we need calls and letters to the Santa Fe City Council! Please!**

Midtown is roaring forward despite the accelerating pandemic, associated financial and economic instability -- and the shift to virtual "public" meetings where public comments are taken (from the few who find out it is possible) but the City Council can't hear them because of technical problems.

From the [New Mexican, 3/23/20](#):

The city also is making plans for when the public health crisis ends. **Webber said planning for the redevelopment of the midtown campus is ongoing**; he has asked his directors of economic development, public works, and parks and recreation to get brick-and-mortar projects ready for construction.

**"I wouldn't be surprised to see a package come out of the Congress and signed by the president that is comparable to FDR's first 100 days,"** he said, referring to President Franklin D. Roosevelt's response to the Great Depression. **"If we're prepared with a lot of projects that can immediately be implemented, I think there will be a huge amount of money and energy and positive optimism to put America and put Santa Fe back to work."** (emphasis added)

Setting aside the ridiculous comparison between what has just come from Congress and the New Deal, what we see in the case of Midtown is pure disaster capitalism. The City is not the developer here. The City's aim is to sell this property to a master developer or possible multiple developers, who will develop the property on a for-profit basis. It is these developers who would profit from the "package" Webber refers to, greased by the "huge amount of money and energy and positive optimism" (which has got to be better than negative optimism, right?).

The City's opacity on this huge, central development -- especially after promising a far more open process -- is really disturbing. Why is this being rammed through right now, in the middle of the worst pandemic since polio or the 1918 flu, at a time when the City Council cannot even properly meet and no real public meetings are even possible? And why is the City not ruling out selling or leasing all or part of this land to a nuclear weapons agency, after all the [resolutions](#) the City has passed condemning that mission?

Lydia Clark, LASG Outreach Director, spoke last night at the virtual City Council meeting, asking the City to consider using the Midtown Campus --

**to create a centralized location for temporary services. It is spacious enough to create the necessary social distancing between people while conducting these services, and it has numerous buildings which can accommodate these needs now. This is the highest and best use of this property on a temporary basis to serve the community of Santa Fe during this crisis.**

**This means tabling and postponing any further development of Santa Fe Midtown Campus project until this crisis is over. Pursuing this development at this time is a careless use of time, energy, and funds by the City given the current economic instability of our city, state, country and the world. Please remember you work for us, not the developers. Use this property for the City of Santa Fe now.**

Joni Arends of Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety (CCNS) also spoke, making the notable point that much more transparency in this process was recently promised but not delivered:

We are requesting more transparency in the Midtown decision-making process. We cite from the November 16, 2019 *Santa Fe New Mexican* article, which reads:

"Starting in early January, Hernandez will have a series of public study sessions with the mayor and City Council discussing how candidates score under various criteria such as experience, financial approach, composition of the team, the development program, respecting adjacent neighbors and how their ideas fit into the city's theme for the property: "Live, work, learn, play."

Further in the same article:

"The evaluation and study session period may or may not lead to an exclusivity agreement with a master developer that is designed to lead toward a disposition and development agreement, possibly by the end of 2020, detailing terms of sale of the campus and phasing of the project, likely over several, even many years, Hernandez said."

We reference the January 14, 2020 *Santa Fe New Mexican* article, which reads:

"A new component of public input will come into play in February, March and April as the city seeks more specifics from the community of what is wanted at the midtown campus. Hernandez said city funding has been set aside to invite local organizations to engage the community in novel ways to get specific input that will be used as the city negotiations with the chosen developer."

Such public input events have not taken place, which is understandable given the current pandemic. Nevertheless, we have seen no notices in newspapers or in the Midtown Monday updates about such opportunities - nor any type of notice about postponement about such input events.

Instead of the promised public process that was to begin in January -- long before choosing a developer -- some of us got an email from the City saying

...the Governing Body will host a special hearing on April 13, 2020 to provide an opportunity for the public to meet the master developer that the Evaluation Committee is recommending for approval to enter into an Exclusive Negotiation Agreement with the City.

In other words, **the public is invited to a virtual reception to meet the master developer that has already been chosen.** The City Council will have no comparative vote -- only up or down. The public will have no say at all in who develops this property. As for LANL at Midtown, **all possibilities are still open.**

Our proposed resolutions (no LANL at Midtown, support for a Site Wide Environmental Impact Statement [SWEIS]) have not been introduced by any councilor.

Greg, for the Study Group

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March 25, 2020

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**If you are in Santa Fe, quick Midtown Project alert: if you want to speak against a LANL site in Santa Fe, call or email the City before 1 pm today**

Dear friends in Santa Fe –

Apologies for the rather late notice, but this morning's *Santa Fe New Mexican* alerted us to an opportunity for public input to the City Council regarding any possible LANL role in the City's Midtown Project ("[Santa Fe City Council to consider \\$500,000 for coronavirus response](#)"). Tonight's [agenda](#)

includes three [I see only two] public hearings in which people who wish to testify or make "petitions from the floor" on a matter not on the agenda have been instructed to call the city at 505-955-6520 or send an email to [publiccomment@santafenm.gov](mailto:publiccomment@santafenm.gov) with their name and number before 1 p.m.

"We will call you during the meeting," the agenda states.

An employee in the City Clerk's Office said around 3 p.m. Tuesday that no one had yet requested to speak.

Comments about Midtown or LANL will need to be in "petitions from the floor" at or after 7:00 pm and if you wish to speak then you should put "petitions from the floor" in the subject line of your email.

Recent previous [letters](#) and our Midtown [web page](#) provide talking points.

Mayor Webber and the City are [forging on as fast as possible](#) on the Midtown project.

The city also is making plans for when the public health crisis ends. Webber said planning for the redevelopment of the midtown campus is ongoing; he has asked his directors of economic development, public works, and parks and recreation to get brick-and-mortar projects ready for construction.

"I wouldn't be surprised to see a package come out of the Congress and signed by the president that is comparable to FDR's first 100 days," he said, referring to President Franklin D. Roosevelt's response to the Great Depression. "If we're prepared with a lot of projects that can immediately be implemented, I think there will be a huge amount of money and energy and positive optimism to put America and put Santa Fe back to work."

After initially promising feedback from one or two city councilors regarding our proposed [resolutions](#) we have received no further replies to any inquiries. We believe the Council is being railroaded using a dubious interpretation of ([voluntary](#)) city procurement rules.

Obviously, you can write letters or make calls to City councilors, or write letters to editors, at any time!

Stay safe,

Greg, for the Study Group

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March 21, 2020

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## We call for sanity, not nuclear production: please join and recruit others

### Suggested actions:

1. **Call for Sanity: help us recruit businesses, organizations, and religious communities.**
2. **As described in the [previous letter](#) write or call Santa Fe city councilors, if you live there, and recruit others to do so.** (For more talking points see this [letter](#) from LASG Outreach Director Lydia Clark.)
3. **Write letters to editors; they are effective.**
4. Please help us recruit other activist leaders; they can subscribe to this list by sending a blank email [here](#)

### Dear New Mexico activist leaders –

In 2005 and 2006, hundreds of organizations and businesses in New Mexico, nearly a hundred national and international organizations, and thousands of individuals joined the "[Call for Nuclear Disarmament](#)," demanding "Disarmament, Not Production!" (this [brochure](#) went with the Call; it is dated now but is still a useful overview).

With this letter we are reopening that Call now in an updated form, to reflect current pressing issues. Here is the new version: "[We call for sanity, not nuclear production](#)."

### Please help us recruit business, organizational, and religious community sign-ons!

Many of the signers of that earlier Call are still in business today and are likely to sign the new Call if asked. Will you be the one to ask them? Please do!

We will frequently update a published list of signatories so we can all avoid duplication of effort. We will put a link to that list near the top of the [Call](#).

You may have noticed that we have changed the name of this list from "friends" to "activist leaders." We hope you will be exactly that -- as many of you already are. Anyone can help with this Call, in ways large or small. Every phone call will help.

We are not opening this Call to individuals. The role for individuals in this Call is to recruit businesses, organizations, and churches.

Recruiting sign-ons to this Call can be done from home, an important consideration given the COVID-19 public health emergency.

We need you because we don't have your contacts, and we are working long hours in other ways. Building local opposition to the "Plutopia" planned for us while demanding values compatible with civilization, democracy, and a sustainable environment is extremely important work that everyone can do. Your help could really make a difference; it did in 2005-2006 and it will again today.

LANL is now gearing up for round-the-clock pit production involving 2,000 additional production and support staff by 2025 at the latest, on top of what we are now hearing are 2,000 pit production-related staff already in place -- 4,000 pit-related staff in all. NNSA expects LANL pit production expansion and related construction to cost more than \$6.5 billion over the next five years, and that is just the beginning.

How much political loyalty do you imagine \$1.3 billion per year would buy in New Mexico? Do you want progressive values in our political leaders? A Green New Deal? Social justice? Climate protection? Economic and social renewal? Environmental protection? Forget all those, because a new not-so-little Rocky Flats is pretty much their policy and fiscal opposite.

Under this plan LANL would become a new, mid-sized "Rocky Flats Plant." Yet for its first three decades, Rocky Flats had *fewer* total staff than LANL expects to recruit and assign to pit production. So please don't think this is to be any kind of "mini" or "boutique" operation. And it's full scope

has not yet been revealed, because LANL simply cannot do this mission in its old existing facilities, or do so for long, or do so safely. Once the hook is set, we can expect even bigger plans than the ones we see now.

As you may read tomorrow in the newspaper, or soon, and contrary to prior statements to contractors, news media, citizens, and local governments, LANL has begun amassing the staff, facilities, and funding to produce not just 30 or more pits per year (ppy) by 2026, *but also at least 80 ppy by 2030*.

This story was first covered by the *Nuclear Security and Deterrence Monitor* ("[Planned Los Alamos Pit Plant Could Surge to 80 a Year. NNSA Says](#)," Mar 11, 2020) and the *Aiken Standard* ("[NNSA study: Los Alamos National Lab could boost pit production to meet national needs](#)," Mar 13, 2020).

We will tell this story -- a story of contractor greed, partisan pork-barrel competition, and neocon bloodlust -- in the next Bulletin. Our senators and Rep. Lujan are on the wrong side.

Finally, you may find these two articles inspiring and useful in the present emergency. I did.

- [COVID-19: A Lesson Coronavirus is About to Teach the World](#) (Jonathan Cook, 19 Mar 2020)
- [COVID-19: The Mutilated World Is Moved by the Nurses and Doctors](#) (Vijay Prashad, 19 Mar 2020, moving illustrations)

Greg, for the Study Group

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March 17, 2020

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## Action items, this letter:

- **If in Santa Fe: urgently write or call your City councilor and any other councilors you may know ([contact information](#)). Messages:**
  - "No LANL in Santa Fe." Use your words. ([Background](#), talking points on the Midtown project)
  - Adopt a resolution preventing LANL or its parent NNSA from participating in the Midtown project ([draft](#), submitted to Council Feb. 26)
  - Adopt a resolution requesting a Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement (SWEIS) for LANL ([draft](#), submitted to Council Feb. 26)
  - In your calls and letters, condemn industrial plutonium processing and manufacture of plutonium warhead cores ("pits") at LANL; reject nuclear pork-barrel and its specious "economic development" promises
- **If you know anyone in Santa Fe, ask them to make these calls.**

## Dear New Mexico friends –

The action portion of this message is similar to our [March 10 letter](#). Please see the action items above!

There is this added bit of news, received in an emailing from the City, which makes our request very urgent:

"The Midtown Redevelopment Evaluation Committee has made its recommendation for the most qualified developer to the Governing Body [City Council], who will meet with the developer in an executive session on March 25 to get clarification and ask questions before moving forward with an exclusivity agreement."

*The City is very close to formally selecting a developer. We do not know who this developer is, or what the roles our nuclear weapons agency (NNSA) and its LANL contractor (Triad, LLC) might play in his or her proposal, right now or in the future.*

At this point, there is zero transparency as to what this project really is. The proposed components, "values," and "visions" comprise a large, vague smorgasbord from which many different outcomes could materialize. The process is entirely secret.

*We remain very concerned about a possible NNSA or LANL presence in this project. LANL's work is nearly all nuclear weapons related. It is a bomb lab and unless we can stop it, is about to be a production plant -- perhaps soon a failed production plant. We do not want the City to enable nuclear weapons production.*

*Separately, we also do not believe it is wise to proceed with this project under current a) pandemic and b) incipient economic recession conditions.*

***We hope you will contact the City Council ASAP and convince your friends to do so as well, expressing these and/or related supporting views if you share them.***

In two emails, Lydia wrote to the City Council,

In view of the current COVID-19 (coronavirus) crisis facing the nation, the State of New Mexico, and the City of Santa Fe, we are requesting that no further work be conducted on the Santa Fe Midtown (Campus) District Project at this time, and until further notice.

The duty and highest priority of the City Council at this time is to provide the best prevention, protection, health care and welfare for the citizens of the City of Santa Fe.

We appreciate your concern, attention and actions on behalf of the City of Santa Fe, and ask a response to this request by March 20, 2020.

In prayers for safety, health, and peace for our City, our nation, and the world, we remain,

and

The coronavirus pandemic is a national emergency that is already changing our society and economy, to a degree and in ways we do not yet understand. We cannot be sure that yesterday's financial guarantees will be solid tomorrow, or that any given developer or tenant will want to, or be able to, follow through on their commitments. The City's priorities may change. Federal priorities may change. To move forward with a huge project like this, with its very high development costs, in these very fragile times is not advisable. This is a big financial gamble for the City of Santa Fe at this time. The instability of the economy of the United States is weighing heavily in the minds of Americans. What convincing evidence of financial stability could any developer really provide?

We aren't asking to abandon the project, but to put it on hold until there is more clarity and this multifaceted emergency is past. It is going to get a lot worse before it gets better.

It is very important to try to reach councilors as soon as you can.

There is some really big news about LANL's proposed mission change: *NNSA is building an 80 pit per year (ppy) plant at LANL, not a 30 ppy plant.* Next time.

Thank you in advance!

Greg, for the Study Group

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[^ back to top](#)

2901 Summit Place NE Albuquerque, NM 87106, Phone: 505-265-1200



# Los Alamos Study Group



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March 10, 2020

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## Please write, call, and/or attend the Santa Fe City Council: "No LANL in Santa Fe"; more

### Action items, this letter:

- If in Santa Fe:

1. Please write or call the City Council ([contact information](#)). Messages:

- a. "No LANL in Santa Fe." Use your words. ([Background](#), talking points on the Midtown project)
- b. Adopt a resolution preventing LANL or its parent NNSA from participating in the Midtown project ([draft](#), submitted to Council Feb. 26)
- c. Adopt a resolution requesting a Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement (SWEIS) for LANL ([draft](#), submitted to Council Feb. 26)
- d. Condemn industrial plutonium processing and manufacture of plutonium warhead cores ("pits") at LANL; reject nuclear pork-barrel and its specious "economic development" promises

2. Attend the first part of the evening session of the City Council meeting tomorrow, City Council chambers downtown ([map](#)), 7:00 pm, to make these points during petitions from the floor

Wherever you are: call us at 505-265-1200 and volunteer. We have work to do -- good work, for you, with us, if you want to help.

### Dear New Mexico friends –

As we have [said](#), what is being proposed for New Mexico is dramatically *more* than even the level of nuclear military subordination we have experienced up to now. We are being invaded again. Look at the [numbers](#). Look at the [plans](#), to the extent we know them (which is very little).

Many people near and far, including Democrats who consider themselves very "progressive," consider New Mexico's increasing commitment to nuclear weapons and waste to be our state's "Manifest Destiny." They like the *jobs*. They think it's *inevitable*. They don't use that term, "Manifest Destiny," and they may not even realize they are endorsing it, but what is happening now is in many ways an extension of what happened here and across the West in 1846 and for a half-century or so afterwards.

These people think, Los Alamos is the *natural* place for a pit factory -- they *already make pits*. \*[\*Reality check: 29 pits in 24 years.] *We don't want "expanded" pit production* [i.e. production at a *non-LANL* location]. It goes *without saying*. New Mexico is after all a kind of "*savage reservation*" (Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*). It is a *poor* state. It needs *economic development* and *jobs*. Those who oppose building a pit factory here are *provincial*. They are *NIMBYs*. They are not as *enlightened* and *objective* as we of the professional managerial class, we in the "arms control" community, who understand that New Mexico needs to make this *small sacrifice* for the *greater good*.

It's bullshit. There's no logic or truth in any of it. It is the language of conquest.

You all know that if LANL can't set up and operate a new "little" Rocky Flats pit factory by the mid-2020s, NNSA will not be able to produce a new warhead for the Air Force's planned new ballistic missile any time soon. It isn't *needed*, not even to field the new missiles, but all parties *want* it. As far as new pits any time soon are concerned, that, not the hokey-pokey, is what it's all about. Not pit aging, or any other malarkey. New warheads, with new "features" and much greater accuracy.

If the arms control community truly opposed this warhead, why would they want LANL to make pits for it?

- **Today, the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) published a draft Supplement Analysis (SA) for pit production at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL).**



Find NNSA's announcement and link to the SA [here](#).

Our comment, which you can mine for talking points: "[Failure To Conduct Detailed EIS Process For LANL Is Dangerous Insult To Los Alamos And Northern New Mexico](#)".

We have commented on the need for a new SWEIS many times before, for example [here](#) (further links within). The *Albuquerque Journal North* has editorialized on this recently ("[Delegation should support strong review of pit production](#)", Feb 16, 2020).

Many more shoes remain to be dropped on this issue, a small part of the overall LANL expansion and pit production battle. We are working on concert with others but *we need your help*. Please call.

- **Report on last week's demonstration (noon) and workshop(evening)**

There were about 20 people who met with us outside Senator Udall's office to ask the Senator to request a SWEIS. A dozen or so continued with us to Senator Heinrich's, to ask the same thing. Representatives came out to meet with us (federal security being what it is) -- one from Senator Udall's (who did not take notes) and two from Senator Heinrich's office (who did).

To all those who came -- thank you.

We have asked the senators and Governor for their help in getting a SWEIS started many times over the past two years. They have not done so. Hence today's [commentary](#).

About a dozen people also came for the evening workshop and discussion. One person set to work even before she left, and since then we have had an interesting and hopeful report from a conversation with a Santa Fe city councilor. **Please do call those councilors!**

- **Today Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety (CCNS) presented a petition calling for a SWEIS and what is called a "programmatic" (nationwide) EIS (PEIS) for pit production**

We are *somewhat* supportive of this effort. We would *fully* support it if it *didn't have a call for a PEIS in it*, as explained in our last [letter](#).

This is a much bigger issue than just this petition.

We are sympathetic because in 2018 and 2019, we also called for two EIS efforts, a PEIS (or supplement), and a SWEIS. It made sense, we thought.

Now, however:

1. A local EIS is underway for pit production at the Savannah River Site (SRS), *but not here*;
2. We can better see the [great scale](#) of the proposed LANL expansion, including but not limited to pit production; and
3. We see *many* parties seeking to build a pit production facility at LANL, or passively allowing it, ignoring both our own and NNSA's analysis. It is the default liberal and Democratic Party choice. Facts and engineering realities seem to make no difference for many people. Apparently, if LANL can't make pits these folks would have to come to grips with their own tacit support, or semi-collapsed opposition, to new nuclear weapons. It's too big a step for them. It will cost friends, financial support, and political support. So LANL is the "go-to" place to make pits, the compromise they and their friends can live with, keep their jobs, etc.

In this political environment, so highly prejudicial against New Mexico for these reasons and many others, asking for a PEIS does not make sense any more. Requesting a PEIS means, politically, "Pit production at SRS should be reevaluated, *but you can go ahead in my back yard*."

By the way, any nationwide EIS (PEIS) on pit production *would not address LANL's vast expansion plans in their entirety*, just LANL's *pit production* plans -- and that, without crucial detail and alternatives. So it would be both less broad and less deep than a SWEIS.

*It is important to draw a bright line here*, and to understand what is going on. Unless the emphasis is changed away from a "nationwide" perspective, those who are seeking (or standing aside for) a pit factory will look at the call for a PEIS and take away just that message, ignoring the call for a SWEIS and anything else -- which in Washington are pejoratively called "local issues." They will not stop or reconsider what they are doing in promoting a pit factory here. Remember, for the arms control community, their funders, the Big Green groups active on nuclear issues, nearly all active Democrats outside this state, and most if not all of the Democratic leadership in this state, LANL is the *natural* place for pit production, the *best* political option.

So it is important to *resist*, to not "get along," to draw a line while we can. It is important to *not agree* with those who are OK with making a pit factory in NM, with those who unconsciously think it is our "Manifest Destiny" to be colonized by federal nuclear forces. If we don't draw that line our natural social instincts will be used to "socially engineer" us straight to hell.

We know CCNS *very much doesn't* want LANL to be a pit factory, and that is why they are doing this petition. We are eager to stand with them on this from this time forward, *provided* they ditch the call for a PEIS.

- **We are in a time of revolutionary change. We all must change, and will.**

As we said in [Bulletin #268](#), COVID19 is rapidly changing the world. It will change all of our lives. If you weren't convinced, or didn't already realize this, I hope you do now.

Some people think things will return to "normal" after a while -- say, when Trump no longer is president, a vaccine and better treatments for COVID19 are found, the collapse of our climate is "solved," and so on.

That is not going to happen.

Just as regards COVID19, there is no reason to think the US health system is better than northern Italy's. Unless something changes for the better, COVID19 is likely to overwhelm the US health system by roughly late May. Do you think New Mexico is ready? It most assuredly is not, as one supervising physician recently remarked. Meanwhile, much in our social, economic, and political life will change.

But there is more, so much more. Picking up another thread, global production of crude oil (technically, crude oil and field condensate) temporarily peaked in late 2018. Since depletion of existing fields never sleeps, it took massive US fracking efforts to keep world production rising just a little bit until late 2018. Now demand and price have collapsed. US fracking efforts will decline, since even with previous prices the industry as a whole made no profit. "Sweet spots" -- the best spots to drill -- were declining anyway. The Governor and legislature are exquisitely attuned to this, but the plans that have been made to improve New Mexico's social development now have even less chance of success than they did before, which was very little. This Governor has largely sacrificed the environment for a neoliberal development fantasy of plutonium pits, fracking, Facebook, the Space Force, and movies. We are sympathetic; that is more or less the menu of choices our political culture provides. But what about a real social contract and real human and environmental values? What about a future for our young people that makes social, ecological *and* economic sense for a change?

I could go on, but the point to return to is that big changes are coming -- fast. It is very easy to underestimate that of which we have no experience.

Here at the Study Group, we expect a changed social and organizing environment perhaps as early as by this week's end or next week, simply due to further COVID19 case discovery. We cannot expect to "turn out the troops" in numbers for a while now, nor should we try.

We are living in a revolutionary time. We need to pull out all the stops for each other, for our communities, for the timeless values that really count when the chips are down. Because they are going down. It is a teachable moment. What will we demonstrate, in the time we have?

Greg, for the Study Group

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[^ back to top](#)

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March 3, 2020

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## REMINDER: TOMORROW -- DEMONSTRATION (NOON), DISCUSSION AND WORKSHOP (6 PM)

- **Emergency demonstration at Sen. Udall's office ([map](#)) in Santa Fe, noon Wednesday 3/4/20; when we are done speaking with Udall's people we will walk to Sen. Heinrich's office on Marcy Street**
- **Also tomorrow(3/4/20): discussion, action planning at 6 pm, First Christian Church, 645 Webber St., Santa Fe ([map](#))**
- **Mark your calendars: update, discussion, in Albuquerque Wednesday March 11, place TBD**
- **Think locally, act locally, win locally and globally; avoid distraction and division**

## Dear New Mexico friends –

Please come tomorrow!

As we [said](#) a few days ago, what is being proposed for northern New Mexico -- let's not kid ourselves, all of New Mexico -- is dramatically different than even the level of nuclear military enthrallment we have suffered thus far.

The good news is that the nuclear-military juggernaut is a tottering wreck, and a storm is coming. We will talk about that tomorrow.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Finally in the news:* the huge accumulated National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) "slush fund" of unspent prior-year funds, now in the range of \$8 billion dollars ("[\\$20B Budget Would 'Choke' NNSA, Skeptical House Approps Cardinal Says](#), *Nuclear Security & Deterrence Monitor*, Feb 28, 2020):

Meanwhile, [Rep. Marcy] Kaptur, like her counterpart on the House Armed Services Committee days before, said she was concerned that the NNSA is sitting on some \$8 billion of unspent appropriations from 2019. The chairwoman said that pile of cash itself is proof that the agency has already bitten off more than it can chew from the Treasury.

"[T]he fact that they're a little bit behind tells us that, again, we can't choke them with money that'll just sit there," Kaptur told reporters. "We have to develop a budget that can be realistically accomplished in the nuclear modernization."

An NNSA spokesperson, in a statement ahead of Thursday's appropriations hearing, said most of the \$8 billion in carry-over funding from fiscal 2019 was earmarked for existing weapons life-extension and construction operations. A fraction, some \$340 million, was unobligated.

Most of the carry-over funds are in the Directed Stockpile program, the spokesperson said, where they help pay the bills for operating and expanding the NNSA nuclear weapons complex. That includes "funding nuclear warhead life extension programs, and infrastructure activities, [and] capital construction projects..."

Related, Feb. 27: [Feinstein, Markey Request GAO Study on Affordability of Nuclear Weapons](#)

We are usually unimpressed with Sen. Markey's activities but when paired with the powerful Sen. Feinstein, and knowing some of the parties involved, we are very pleased.

Rep. Thornberry, Ranking Member of House Armed Services and a major hawk, [foresees](#) a "most contentious" fight over nuclear modernization. Let us hope he is right. Bring it on.

We have corrected and updated (with the additional data now available, all inflated to 2020 dollars) this [chart](#) of US warhead design, testing, and production spending, from 1948 to this year's proposed spending levels for FY21-25.

\*\*\*\*\*

On the novel coronavirus, we expect a large number of US cases to be reported this week as testing becomes more prevalent. The mainstream media is getting better on this issue; readers might want to also follow [The Automatic Earth](#) as a decent source of filtered updates. There are others of course, if you want to put in more time and thought.

The New Mexico State Epidemiologist Dr. Michael Landen [said](#) yesterday: "We feel that community spread in New Mexico is likely." Contingency plans for [school closures](#) are being readied, among other preparations.

It is possible, depending on how this virus propagates, that portions of the US nuclear weapons complex will temporarily suspend operations.

We will discuss the wider implications of this epidemic tomorrow evening. We are entering an Age of Disruption. Not just our nuclear-military juggernaut but pretty much everything in our just-in-time, financialized economy is now teetering, or slipping, or being renegotiated -- you pick the word. In many ways we are on the brink of collapse. It will be gradual in some ways, sudden in others, plain to see sometimes, and hidden in others. The extent to which it is also an age of renewal is up to us.

In that regard you may find this Alexander Aston [essay](#) rather excellent, as I do. It begins:

It took until the first two months of 2020 for the long Twentieth Century to finally come to an end. One thing now seems absolutely clear, this will be the decade that the majority finally come to understand that things are never going back to "normal." To be sure, the complex entanglements of institutions, narratives, cultural practices, and economic relationships that emerged during the previous century have been under immense strain these past two decades. Enormous effort has been expended to maintain the inertia of the global system, from the immense violence of imperial politics and regime change wars, to the more subtle violence of economic dispossession by a privileged elite that control the mechanisms of power.

\*\*\*\*\*

Just before Christmas, we wrote (in [Bulletin 265](#)):

**Very real dangers aside, nuclear weapons undermine the moral, material, diplomatic, and ecological foundations of our country and civilization.**

There are those who think local governments and citizens should rejoice in the booty looted from taxpayers by our nuclear weapons labs. Our New Mexico politicians want to increase that spending. But nuclear weapons do not give us anything. They take. They corrode every aspect of our civilization. What seeming benefits they provide to a few incur great expense to all. Some of those costs are plain to see; others are hidden amidst our society's overall crassness, violence, and environmental carelessness.

Even many of the founders of Los Alamos, Rotblat first but later Oppenheimer, Fermi, Rabi, Bethe and many others, understood that thermonuclear weapons were genocidal. Rabi and Fermi said as much, and called the hydrogen bomb "[n]ecessarily an evil thing in any light."

Those who pursue disarmament and peace should consider carefully these words of the great Indian journalist, political analyst, and activist Praful Bidwai (1949-2015):

*Historically, [internal] differences have never prevented disarmament campaigns from becoming effective.; What has crippled them is lack of clarity on the point that nuclear weapons are wholly evil, unacceptable and indefensible -- that is, failure to mobilise enough moral force internally.; Moral force is all-important when you are rolling back an epochal injustice. Without it, India could not have achieved independence, nor South Africa liberation from apartheid. On such morality, there can be no compromise.*

Praful Bidwai, "The Struggle for Nuclear Disarmament," in [Out of the Nuclear Shadow](#), Smitu Kothari and Zia Mian, eds.

Unfortunately such views remain effectively marginal among "progressives" and the environmental community in New Mexico.

To be politically effective, it is important if not essential to actually support, and actually oppose, real things in the here and now. Everything else is pretty much hot air. "All politics is local" said Tip O'Neill. And so it is in nuclear politics also.

Logically, asking for a national ("programmatic") environmental impact statement (PEIS) for pit production, to be followed by more detailed EISs (site-wide, or project-specific) at the two proposed production sites, makes sense. That's what we said early last year, and in the year before.

Logical, yes. *Best*, no. We support a PEIS for pit production, but for New Mexicans it should be secondary to a new LANL site-wide EIS (SWEIS), for many reasons.

More broadly, **all it would take to deliver New Mexico over to the nuclear colonialists entirely would be to get those who might oppose the nuclear assault on New Mexico to think nationally (or worse, internationally).** Sounds rather high-minded, doesn't it, to look at the bigger picture?

It is not. It is at best mistaken, both in its direction and in the degree to which it rises to the "name of action," as Hamlet put it.

We support a PEIS for pit production. Let it come after a commitment to a new LANL SWEIS. It is at LANL, and on New Mexico, that the hammer is falling hardest by far. Don't get suckered by nuclear agendas set in Washington, compatible with the goals of our nuclear pork-barrel delegation, that promote or accept a pit factory at LANL. The pit factory in your back yard is the only one you can really stop.

We can discuss this further on Wednesday.

Greg, Trish, Lydia, and Michelle for the Study Group

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# Los Alamos Study Group



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February 29, 2020

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## SANTA FE, NORTHERN NEW MEXICO UNDER NUCLEAR ASSAULT

1. **Emergency demonstration at Sen. Udall's office ([map](#)) in Santa Fe, noon Wednesday 3/4/20; when we are done speaking with Udall's people we will walk to Sen. Heinrich's office on Marcy Street also**
2. **Discussion and workshop same day (3/4/20) at 6 pm, First Christian Church, 645 Webber St., Santa Fe ([map](#))**
3. **Midtown: we have asked the City Council to bar NNSA and LANL participation: please help**

Dear New Mexico friends –

We have resorted to literally purple prose but we are not exaggerating. Santa Fe and Northern New Mexico truly are under nuclear assault.

### 1. Emergency demonstration

As the *Santa Fe New Mexican* has written, the National Nuclear Security Administration's (NNSA's) "[\[p\]roposed budget would almost triple plutonium spending](#)" (Feb 24, 2020).

Our [press release](#) of the day before had further shocking details. (More have come to light since then, which will be summarized by us elsewhere).

At Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), the 5-year proposed spending for building up a plutonium warhead core ("pit") factory is \$5.4 billion -- *more than a billion per year for the foreseeable future*. Even this does not include a billion or so in other related construction over these 5 years.

Thousands of new workers are being hired to support the growing "Rocky Flats" mission, about 1,000 people per year for the next 5 years.

The new mission will be housed in an old, unsafe facility. How do we know it is unsafe? The highest independent defense nuclear safety authority in the U.S. says so ("[Safety Board: The Los Alamos plutonium facility does not adequately protect the public](#)," Dec 2, 2019).

Where, you might ask, is the environmental impact analysis for building a new "Rocky Flats South"? After all, an environmental impact statement (EIS) for the proposed pit factory at the Savannah River Site (SRS) in South Carolina, which will handle much less plutonium and have less environmental impact than the surplus plutonium mission it is replacing in the same facility, has been underway since last year.

So South Carolina, that paragon of environmental consciousness represented by ultra-green Senator Lindsay Graham and his colleagues (LOL), gets a new EIS. New Mexico, represented by senators Udall and Heinrich, does *not* get *any* EIS -- despite the reality that LANL plans to build dozens of new facilities and a second campus altogether, all as part of the greatest contemplated LANL expansion since the early 1950s.

(Even more strange, our "liberal" or "progressive" congressional delegation and governor have been hyperactive in promoting LANL as the sole and only site to make plutonium pits, while "pretty hawkish" (his words) Lindsay Graham and colleagues have been quite diffident about pit production at SRS. In the words of one highly-engaged person in South Carolina, they are "missing in action" as far as pit production is concerned. By contrast, every single one of our Democratic delegation, and our Governor, are gung-ho for pits at LANL.)

Udall [supposedly believes](#) in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). [Just not when it might expose environmental and safety problems that might delay plutonium pit production](#).

We need to stop this nonsense. We need to wake people up. All it would take for NNSA to decide to write a desperately-needed Site-Wide EIS (SWEIS) encompassing all these contemplated changes, alternatives to them, and mitigation strategies, would be a letter from the New Mexico delegation. NNSA fears the openness of a SWEIS. They fear possible delays. They fear having to commit to limits of any kind of enforceable Record of Decision involving a Mitigation Plan. They fear having to bring up modern solutions to their commuting problem that might inconvenience their precious new hires. (It is so very difficult to hire, indoctrinate, and retain thousands of new scientists and engineers to work on nuclear weapons when the world is crying out for their help in other fields.)

**So please come to the emergency demonstration, first at Sen. Udall's office ([map](#)) in Santa Fe, at noon on Wednesday, March 4, and then**

at Senator Heinrich's office on Marcy Street.

## 2. Discussion and workshop

The proposed Trump nuclear buildup just gets bigger and bigger. As we have explained, the initiative in doing this is coming from NNSA and the labs. Even the Pentagon, which was caught flat-footed by NNSA's Christmastime power play (ask us Wednesday), was appalled, according to multiple sources.

For New Mexico this is already a political disaster. Do you think our leading politicians will pay sufficient attention to any other essential issue bearing on the material, public health, and environmental health of the state, especially northern New Mexico, while they believe its future lies in nuclear weapons, the Space Force, pit production, and all the wonderful things the labs can do for the state?

Ben Ray Lujan has even introduced a [package of legislation](#) that would use the labs to replace even more functions of government (or "to spur growth, innovation, and opportunities for New Mexicans", as he put it).

The fact is, we live in an age of disruption. Going back to the priorities of the Cold War would cement New Mexico's position at the bottom of every scale, and ensure that collapse, not transformation and renewal, would be the outcome for the US as a whole. The decade is only two months old, but its fundamental character should already be clear. Dorothy said it, in *The Wizard of Oz*: "We are not in Kansas any more." Most people don't understand this yet. Without being a lot clearer about where we are in the larger scheme of things, no policy prescriptions will "work."

No matter what issue is the main one for you, if you live in New Mexico you are either working against nuclear weapons and war or you are being sold on Capitol Hill as a nuclear weapons supporter by the people you probably voted for.

**Please come on Wednesday evening as well as to the demonstration if you can.** We are virtually certain it will be a valuable discussion and a kind of comfort, if we may say that, in these troubled times. We have a pretty good community of people standing with us, people whom we admire. We don't have to agree about everything. The main thing is, we want to work with you and we need your help. We are all in this situation together.

Among the things we will discuss is the City's Midtown process and how you can keep NNSA and LANL out of it.

## 3. Midtown: Please help us bar NNSA and LANL participation

We have made this [web page](#) to capture recent developments and resources on this project. New talking points are being added to the above web page, so you may want to check those out.

To those who came to the last City Council meeting this past Wednesday -- thank you.

We gave two draft resolutions to the City Council for their consideration:

- [Prohibiting the City of Santa Fe from entering into any development agreement involving any nuclear weapons agencies or their instrumentalities.](#)
- [Requesting a Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement \(SWEIS\) for the proposed expansion of Los Alamos National Laboratory \(LANL\), including the proposed expansion of plutonium missions](#)

**We need your help in promoting these to the Council. Please call or write your councilors!**

LANL's (and NNSA's, but let's keep it simple) participation in this project appears to be driven or pulled from three directions -- from LANL, from the City, and some of the developers.

Regarding the first, Los Alamos -- the lab, the town, and the county -- are out of room. There is literally no place for all these people in existing facilities and in nearby housing. What to do? Move some non-plutonium LANL functions off The Hill. Where?

So far the answer seems to be into a second LANL campus in Santa Fe, via secret Midtown Project negotiations between carefully-selected City staff, developers, and their backers.

**Every single thing about this process is secret:** the changing evaluation criteria, the identities of the project teams and their investors, the names of all the people on the evaluation committee (the composition of which can be changed or augmented without notice), the development proposals, whether the City will sell or lease the land, the price being negotiated -- everything. **Everything is fluid, and everything is secret.** The contractor in charge of the whole process reports to the Mayor and the City's Economic Development office. Everything about this process is being hidden from the public and the City Council.

The one thing that is clear is that the City requires that developers have access to a lot of money up front, which more or less rules out nonprofit educational uses -- the historic propose of this site. Developer Affeldt told his listeners in December that this would be a circa \$400 million project.

This is all about money and private profits -- not people, values, or real economic development. It's about privatization. It's an enclosure. It's colonial. There is nothing democratic about it. Affordable housing? The goal of this project is to *gentrify*, not just all but the bare legal minimum of the project itself but the large Opportunity Zones surrounding it.

And if LANL gets in, they will control. LANL's grip on the City will increase dramatically.

Why the secrecy? Because the City is doing something very ugly, and the Mayor and others involved want to keep the public from having any voice.

In words that assistant city attorney Marcos Martinez wrote to us, even the supposedly-rejected (but as it turns out, not really rejected) development proposals have to be kept from public eyes, lest they be "used inappropriately to sway negotiations through public pressures that are not based on the objective [sic] criteria set out in the [Request for Expressions of Interest]." Secrecy is not a legal requirement ("[Keeping campus proposals secret was the city's own choice](#), *Albuquerque Journal Editorial*, Feb 9, 2020).

We can discuss this further on Wednesday.

Greg, Trish, Lydia, and Michelle for the Study Group

PS: our contest for a new name that would be applicable to a nuclearized "City Formerly Known as Santa Fe" remains open! The top five entries (we have two excellent ones but only two so far) will each receive a tasteful cloisonne lapel pin featuring a peace symbol and broken bomb.

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# Los Alamos Study Group



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February 24, 2020

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**This letter: Please come to Santa Fe City Council Wednesday 2/26/20 6:30 pm at Southside Library, 6599 Jaguar Dr ([map](#)); ALSO mark your calendars: demonstration in Santa Fe, noon 3/4/20 at Sen. Udall's office ([map](#)); ALSO discussion and workshop same day (3/4/20) at 6 pm, First Christian Church, 645 Webber St., Santa Fe ([map](#))**

Dear New Mexico friends –

As you will have seen from last night's press alert ("[Administration seeks 49% increase in Los Alamos nuclear weapons activities, 33% plus-up for LANL overall](#)"), the Santa Fe area is poised to fall under a nuclear cloud far darker than anything seen thus far.

Of course, this won't happen if we ***effectively object***.

*Whatever you do, please don't think the threat to the world, the US, New Mexico, and to northern New Mexico from an emergency "surge" in US nuclear warhead production is not very, very real.*

Because northern New Mexico has been kept poor and vulnerable by long-running failures by New Mexico's political leadership, and because Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) is the only place available for the next 10 or so years to produce new plutonium cores for atomic bombs (the first explosive stage in every US nuclear weapon), *the nuclear hammer is falling most heavily on northern New Mexico.*

The impacts are political, social, economic, and environmental and they have already begun. Their most prominent symptom is passivity. "LANL brings economic development, which trickles down, so we need not come to grips with our lack of a viable social contract." Etc.

As we said in last night's [press alert](#), *LANL probably cannot succeed in its huge expansion plans without expanding into Santa Fe:*

The lab has outgrown the buildable areas on its site, its nearby housing market, the regional road capacity, its electrical supply, its nuclear waste handling and shipping capacity, and the nearby labor force. The entire region has outgrown its water supply. Apparently, LANL must expand off-site to succeed. as a new 'Rocky Flats South.'

*"Whither Santa Fe?" has become a very pertinent question -- and a powerful one, even on the whole world's stage.*

The "Royal City of the Holy Faith of Saint Francis" now has to choose between two prayers. One is that of Saint Francis -- "Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace" -- and the other, "Government, make me an instrument of your wars."

If we don't choose -- and not just in our private opinion, but powerfully in the public sphere -- the choice will be made for us.

We have a lot of political power in this matter. What Arundhati Roy called "the power of proximity." We should use it. Those who are silent in the face of this metastasis are effectively assenting.

Nobody is coming to Santa Fe's rescue, by the way. This particular challenge is ours.

- **Please come to the Santa Fe City Council meeting this Wednesday, February 26, at the Southside Library, 6599 Jaguar Dr ([map](#)). We will meet at 6:30 pm, prior to the evening session at 7:00 pm.**

Our issue at this meeting is the role of the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) and LANL in Santa Fe's Midtown project, about which more below.

At this meeting we should each be able to speak for approximately 3 minutes under Item F on the evening [agenda](#), "Petitions from the Floor."

*Our basic message to the Council is that we do not want, and the Council should formally bar, participation by NNSA and its instrumentalities, such as LANL, in the Midtown development.*

It is perfectly legal for the City to prohibit activities in this project that do not meet the City's criteria. That is why the City has criteria, and that is why

the City is having this process in the first place.

For its part, NNSA has no First Amendment rights, or any other civil rights, as it is not a person or even corporate person. (For what it may be worth, the Study Group established in FOIA litigation that LANL is a federal, not a private or corporate, entity.)

The City's criteria are evolving, as a careful reading of the [latest missives](#) from the City will show, and which the original [Request for Expressions of Interest](#) (RFEI) made clear as well. This is a very fluid process.

Remember, NNSA and its LANL contractor are nuclear weapons institutions. They want to be in Santa Fe to further their nuclear weapons activities, and for no other purpose. That is not just our opinion. That's the law. NNSA cannot do work it is not funded to do. NNSA funds LANL to do nuclear weapons work, primarily. Eighty-five percent of LANL's proposed budget for FY21 is nuclear weapons activities, and most of the rest supports or derives from that mission. *By helping NNSA and LANL, the City would be helping the Trump Administration's outrageous, unprecedented nuclear weapons buildup.*

*Neither we, nor the press, nor the City Council know what NNSA and LANL are proposing to do with or on this rather huge, centrally-located chunk of what is now City land.* That is really outrageous, don't you think?

The City is hiding behind secrecy provisions it has voluntarily adopted, as the *Albuquerque Journal* pointed out ("[Keeping campus proposals secret was the city's own choice](#)," *Albuquerque Journal Editorial*, Feb 9, 2020).

Nevertheless the City can take, and is taking, whatever ideas and work products are submitted and give them to other offerors. Only the public and Council are locked out.

More talking points are available in recent Study Group [letters](#) and [press releases](#).

- **Contest! If you have ideas for a new name that would be applicable to a nuclearized "City Formerly Known as Santa Fe," please send them to us by this Wednesday at 5 pm or bring them to the City Council meeting! The top five entries will each receive a tasteful cloisonne lapel pin featuring a peace symbol and broken bomb.**

Feel free to suggest them to the Council as well, or put them on a sign. No sticks please.

- **On March 4 we will have two events: a demonstration in Santa Fe, at noon at Senator Udall's office, 120 South Federal Place ([map](#) -- this is the downtown Post Office), and then a discussion and workshop at 6 pm at the First Christian Church, 645 Webber St., Santa Fe ([map](#))**

We will be asking Senator Udall to request a new Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement (SWEIS) for LANL. When we have concluded our business with Senator Udall, we hope to walk from there over to Senator Heinrich's office on Marcy Street, assuming enough of those who attend have time.

- **Finally, if you can help us organize please, please call Lydia Clark in Santa Fe at 505-501-2606 or Trish at 505-577-3366.**

See you Wednesday, and the following Wednesday!

Greg, Trish, Lydia, and Michelle for the Study Group



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**This letter: LANL-wide EIS needed; Santa Fe doubles down on Midtown secrecy & possible weapons expansion; your help wanted**

Dear New Mexico friends –

Many of you are rightly focused on the remaining few days of the 2020 legislative session. For those who are, and even more so for those who aren't, please consider the following.

**1. A new Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement (SWEIS) for Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) is badly needed. There are four people who could make it happen. Many of you know them.**

In prior [letters](#) and [Bulletins](#) we have explained why a new LANL SWEIS is desperately needed (follow the links for more details).

In a new editorial, the *Albuquerque Journal* explains why as well ("[Delegation should support strong review of pit production](#)," 2/16/20).

The four people who could make a new SWEIS happen are our two senators, our governor, and the congressman in whose district all this is happening. [Here](#) is how to contact them. You know how to write letters to editors (LTEs). You know how to contact us to help us with outreach. We are stretched very thinly indeed.

**2. If you live in the Santa Fe area, please contact the city councilors and ask them to roll back the secrecy enveloping the huge Midtown project -- and to oppose all LANL involvement.**

[Here](#) are their phone numbers and email addresses. We have explained in detail why this is important in past [letters](#) and we add new information below.

The *Albuquerque Journal* has editorialized against this secrecy and provided important legal and political background ("[Keeping campus proposals secret was the city's own choice](#)," 2/9/20), including the interesting facts that three Santa Fe city councilors didn't want this level of secrecy, which was chosen by the City and is not a legal mandate under state law.

The *Santa Fe New Mexican* editorialized against a closed process as well ("[A closed Midtown Campus process serves no one](#)," 1/30/20)

We have been in correspondence with the City's attorneys about what we see as their illegal denial of public access to the four rejected Master Developer applications, including and especially that of the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), *to which none of the City's arguments for secrecy apply*.

We have learned that the four rejected applications aren't really rejected at all, insofar as these applicants "could still be considered for collaborations at a later stage of the project."

What stage? Apparently any stage, including the financial interviews with the evaluation committee scheduled this coming Thursday. Subsequent to these interviews, the City will issue Requests for Clarification (RFCs) [covering most of the key issues at the site](#), followed by discussions ("interviews") with whoever the applicants want to bring to the table with them.

What we see in this process is a fluid cabal of insiders meeting privately to discuss essentially all aspects of the largest real estate development within City limits we can remember, or perhaps in Santa Fe history, with initial investments in the \$400 million range (as stated in a December 8 presentation by Alan Affeldt). Returns on investment would of course be greater than this, and the gentrification investment opportunities in the extensive surrounding [Opportunity Zones](#) would be extensive.

Some people are clearly planning on making tens of millions of dollars of profits with this project while re-making Santa Fe in ways decided solely by themselves, a small cabal of fellow developers who meet the City's financial requirements for a project of this magnitude, and the small group of City insiders who are deciding essentially everything about this project in total secrecy.

**After providing generic "input" which may or may not be followed, citizens and their elected representatives are completely frozen out of this process until it is completed.**

We aren't asking to see the proposals under consideration, but we are asking to see the rejected applications, which by definition are supposedly not being considered any more. And above all we want NNSA's application, because as explained below, **we believe NNSA and LANL need Santa Fe to facilitate plutonium pit production, and they are trying to make this new identity for Santa Fe a reality before it can be effectively opposed.**

The City is now offering [weekly updates](#) as to the progress of their secret deliberations in a sort of 1984 version of "transparency ."

Even without NNSA, great fortunes, massive egos, and vaulting political ambitions are involved in this development. These ambitions may need LANL as much as LANL needs them.

Please contact your councilors. The intense secrecy of this process smells very bad to us.

### **3. A bit of background**

I have just returned from a busy week in Washington, DC, where I met with a number of parties on and around Capitol Hill as well as with directors of the nuclear warhead plants and labs at an annual nuclear weapons conference.

What is most important to relay first, in this letter, is that the transformation of LANL into its new role as a "production agency" involving "24/7 operations" at LANL's aging plutonium facility is not proceeding in any kind of "normal" government fashion. There is little or no oversight, not even by NNSA.

*It is a crash program proceeding in an entirely unaccountable manner, more characteristic of wartime than peacetime governance.* There are many other indicators of this which could be cited, even an ominous mention by NNSA of its government-wide leadership in "continuity of government" (COG) planning.

Despite statutory requirements that mandate detailed plans, *as of last week no plans for pit production at LANL have been submitted to Congress.* (By contrast we do have a [snapshot](#) of planning at the Savannah River Site (SRS), as well as an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) underway, as well as preliminary engineering analyses.)

Yet Congress fully funded the program at both LANL and at SRS. As noted in my last [letter](#), House Democrats, supported by arms control and nearly all environmental NGOs, have made the LANL program -- a pig in a poke -- the centerpiece of their preferred policy.

When Congress has asked NNSA for plans, the answer has been, "We trust the contractor" [i.e. Triad, LLC].

The environmental and social impacts of pit production at LANL would be far greater than at SRS -- that much is clear. Is New Mexico too corrupt to care?

No details of the fiscal year (FY) 2021 budget request have been submitted to Congress so far, and reportedly none will be, for "weeks," raising the specter of Congress proceeding into budget markup with no budget to mark up.

We are hearing a rumor that the pit production budget request for FY21 has been increased by roughly \$400 million from the level projected last year, to \$1.4 billion, roughly double this year's amount ([chart](#), to get a rough idea of the program growth that was projected last year). We shall see.

LANL is hiring roughly 1,000 new employees per year and expects to continue doing so for several more years. LANL is also planning some \$13 billion in capital projects over the coming decade. Dozens of new buildings are planned.

*The lab has outgrown its site, its nearby housing market, the regional road capacity, its electrical supply, its nuclear waste handling and shipping capacity, and the nearby labor force.* The entire region has outgrown its water supply.

*LANL must expand off-site to succeed in the new pit production mission,* now "needed" not only for the Air Force's new W87-1 warhead, which would enable a new generation of land-based missiles (the fabulously-expensive Ground Based Strategic Deterrent, GBSD), but also for the proposed "W93" Navy warhead, which is planned for production starting in 2036.

LANL is unlikely to expand significantly in the Espanola Valley, given that region's poverty and drug problems. At the August 8 subcontractor forum, neither Espanola nor northern New Mexico were even mentioned.

LANL's greatest challenge is hiring, retaining, and training the nuclear weapons workforce of the future. LANL is therefore looking to Santa Fe for expansion. *That is why NNSA and LANL are so interested in Santa Fe Midtown Project.*

Greg Mello , for the Study Group



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February 11, 2020

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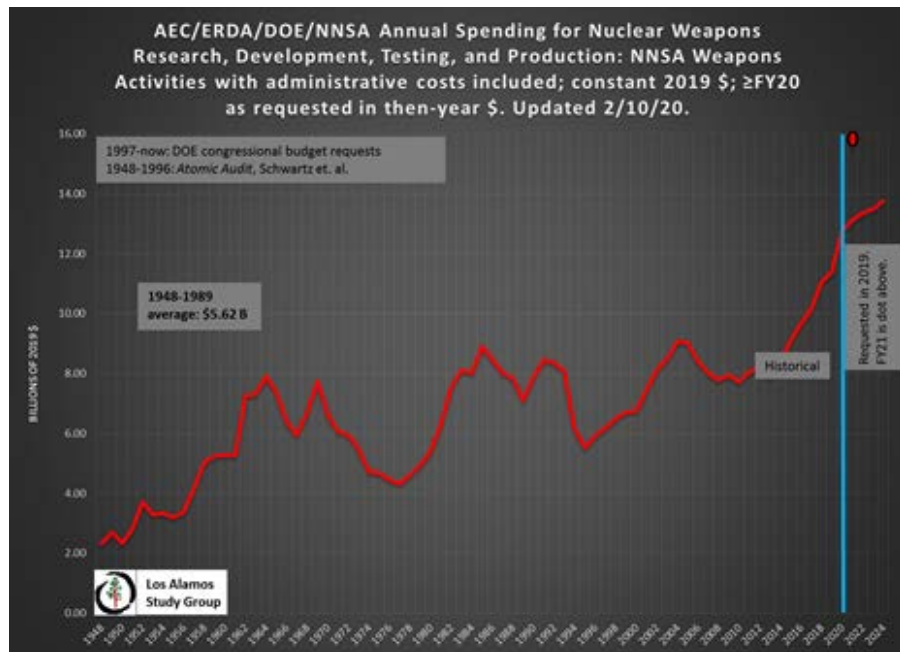
**This letter: Do all Democrats and arms control groups want a pit factory at LANL? So far, yes. Don't be a propaganda victim!**

**Dear New Mexico friends –**

I am in Washington, DC and am scrambling between meetings and necessary followup, so this letter must be very brief.

I could tell you how outraged you should be about the proposed nuclear warhead budget. I will do that in a chart. The red dot is the FY21 proposed Weapons Activities budget of NNSA, with its share of administrative costs. The red line below it is what NNSA projected just last year. They won't get all this money of course, but they will likely get much of it.

How did this happen? That is a longer story, one that the Democratic Party as well as Republican hawks have to answer for. Trump's original budget this year lay along that red line, but with an impeachment vote looming, neoconservatives and lab skills sprinkled throughout government sprang their long-prepared plan, catching NNSA staff, DoD, OMB, and the DOE Secretary by surprise. The head of NNSA and her nuclear weapons deputy, working with Republicans whose support Trump needed to survive impeachment, foisted this budget on the president. DoD was outraged -- to the extent it is funded, it will come from their budget. At this point the dissenters (mostly?) have been brought in line. The Borg moves forward. There is much more interesting to tell you about all this, but it is not so important as what I am about to say.



If you read the newspaper you may get the impression that all those who are critical of this massive increase, in which pit production is a large component, are going to oppose pit production, or oppose the dramatic expansion of LANL. They are not. **At the moment, every single Democrat in Congress has voted for making LANL a pit factory.** They have no problem with LANL expansion. The nuances in Republican positions are less clear, because there have been fewer votes that would expose the differences. **Let's put it this way: Congress does engineering poorly.** The military is another matter. Some do know.

**At the moment, every single arms control organization wants LANL to be a pit factory. At the moment, Democratic-Party-aligned**

"antinuclear" groups are not really opposing this. Some groups even actively support the LANL-as-pit-factory legislation, and theory. Some see it as a workable compromise. Some see it as a looming failure, which failure can accomplish what they do not have the moral or political strength to oppose.

For some this is certainly justified. Committee staff and government auditors sometimes say that failure in this program, especially at LANL, is not a matter of if, but when. The most honest and conscientious have said, "I just hope not too many people are hurt." That's an exact quote. I do not fault such people at all. The system back here will spit out any dissenters faster than you can say, um, "Chelsea Manning" or "Tulsi Gabbard."

Newspapers struggle to get articles out on short notice, with very limited information. This morning's articles on the nuclear weapons budget (*Journal*: [President's budget calls for more spending on nuclear production](#); *New Mexican*: [Trump proposes 25 percent bump in nuke spending](#)) were good articles, but they do little to inform dissent in an age of pervasive propaganda and influence. I wrote this comment to the New Mexican piece:

It would be great if all these commenters were on the same page, or even singing the same style of music. They are not, not by a long shot. And that is part of the core of the political problem we face. Council for a Livable World supports Democrats, period. Democrats like Martin Heinrich, who have pushed for more nuclear weapons. They pull very close to the opposite direction from the Los Alamos Study Group. Union of Concerned Scientists? They lie between these poles. I will see Stephen Young and others later today or tomorrow here in Washington, where I have come to try and undo some of the damage. We shall see what happens. But beware, New Mexicans! All these parties are comfortable with a plutonium pit factory at LANL. Every single one of them. **New Mexicans who care about new priorities must cut through the fog and understand that whatever your opinion may be, your actual power lies in the degree of activity you display with regard to what you can actually change -- which is what happens in the greater Santa Fe area, including Los Alamos. If you want to be more involved, call 505-501-2606 (Lydia Clark) or write me at [gmello@lasg.org](mailto:gmello@lasg.org).** We can win. Many factors are lining up to help. But don't be lulled or confused. National-level opinions merely will not avail, unless you are here in Washington as I am, with expert entre to decisionmakers [you can't really be listened to otherwise]. Opinion means little by itself. Local actions, not just opinions, can definitely avail. Crystal clarity is needed, and **you can tell the real from the fake resistance in part by whether and how hard the Democrats who have been pushing for pit production are being challenged.**

Asking for a nationwide environmental impact statement is quite compatible with, if not -- depending on how it is handled -- helpful toward making LANL to be a pit factory, or with standing aside to let that happen.

Asking for a Site-Wide EIS is far better, because the devil -- to NNSA, that is -- is in the local details. At LANL -- a local EIS is already underway in South Carolina. A SWEIS could bring out a lot of truth, and truth is toxic to nuclear weapons, like sunlight to bacteria.

But any NEPA analysis is very far from a panacea. Much more direct opposition is needed, which is why I stuck our contact information in that comment. **Please do call or write us if you want to help.**

What the arms control groups and the powerful funders who control matters from oak-paneled boardrooms far away do not yet understand, or perhaps care enough about, is that by greenlighting pit production at LANL they are greenlighting the new weapons they decry. LANL is the pit production bellwether and leading site. Air Force hopes for its new warhead now rest on the hope that LANL will be able to "surge" to produce enough pits to at least get started with warhead production. To this end, a major effort to undercut warhead complex safety is underway.

The key takeaway is that a lot rests on the activity and discernment of New Mexicans. Congress pretty much assumes New Mexicans like being hostage to nuclear weapons, because that's what our congressional delegation tells them, and far too many people are silent.

Greg Mello , for the Study Group

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January 21, 2020

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**This letter: Discussion Thursday, Jan. 23, 6 pm, Santa Fe: opposing LANL expansion: what, why, how; more; please write Midtown evaluation committee**

1. Discussion this Thursday, Jan. 23, 6-8 pm in Santa Fe: **Opposing LANL expansion: what, why, how**
2. NM delegation rejects new environmental analysis of pit production & LANL expansion
3. Discussions next month: Jemez Springs; Taos
4. Report on Jan. 15 press conference
5. Tell me again, what are these pits for?
6. Bring the troops home! Global Day of Protest Saturday, Jan. 25
7. Meet Michelle Matisons, Research Associate
8. Billboard coming, stay tuned
9. **Don't forget to write the Midtown Project evaluation committee: No LANL in Santa Fe, not as master developer, not as tenant**

Dear New Mexico friends –

**1. Practical discussion Thursday, January 23, 6-8 pm in Santa Fe at St. John's United Methodist Church, 1200 Old Pecos Trail ([map](#)), Room SB-5: Opposing LANL expansion a) into and b) around Santa Fe, as well as c) in Los Alamos itself: what, why, how.**

It seems absurd that the United States would want to build nuclear weapons at this time in human -- and earth -- history. But such is the case. The U.S. global empire, now slipping away, requires ceaseless, increasing investment to maintain appearances -- no matter how many people and how much nature must be thrown under the proverbial bus to do so.

*Successfully building and running an industrial plutonium warhead core ("pit") production operation at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) is essential to empire, not to mention essential to new kinds of warheads that can't use any of our 5,000 or so surplus pits.*

The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA, which owns LANL), as well as the Pentagon, knows this production will be [very hard to achieve](#). Many who work at LANL cannot imagine LANL succeeding. At the same time many New Mexico progressives think this transformation will be all but impossible to stop. It will be hard to stop if nobody does anything!

There is much to be done, and we hope you will help. If you come on Thursday you will make connections to people, acquire knowledge, and be stronger in that work.

The purposes of this meeting are to make sure you have everything you need to act powerfully and to suggest, discuss, and refine possible actions.

**2. Update on our congressional delegation's failure to request a Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement (SWEIS) and a nation-wide ("programmatic") EIS (PEIS) for pit production.**

As noted previously, our two senators, Congressman Ben Ray Lujan, and Governor Michele Lujan Grisham [had nothing to say](#) when asked by the Associated Press if they support further environmental analysis prior to expanding pit production at LANL.

They were waiting for a briefing from NNSA before knowing what to say. That briefing occurred on January 16.

The delegation then jointly said that no further EIS was necessary -- a disappointing but expected response.

What does this mean?

It means that they want all parties to remain in the dark about the environmental impacts of a new Rocky-Flats-type plutonium warhead factory in Los Alamos, in their rush to offer New Mexico's assistance to Trump's nuclear weapons agenda.

It means they all want as much dirty warhead manufacturing as possible for Los Alamos, and they don't want anybody to know or discuss the

predictable problems and impacts on our communities and environment.

It means they don't want environmental science because it is inconvenient to their militaristic agenda. They fear environmental truth. They want ignorance, for the public and officialdom alike.

It means that when push comes to shove -- actually, long before this -- they are mouthpieces for the labs.

I hope their statement, which will be public soon, clarifies the situation for you. As you will see soon it is worded to give a false impression.

*What does this mean for citizen action? What can we do?*

Come on Thursday.

### **3. Discussions next month**

We are scheduling other in-depth discussions on NNSA's and LANL's efforts to build a pit production facility in Los Alamos while greatly expanding LANL for the sake of designing (and now building) new nuclear weapons:

- **In Jemez Springs, Sunday, February 2, 1 pm, Jemez Springs Public Library, 30 Jemez Springs Plaza ([map](#)).**
- **In Taos, February 5 (note change!), noon, location TBD.**

LANL has not seen such a huge proposed expansion, involving thousands (net) of new staff and some \$13 billion in capital improvements and new buildings, since the early 1950s.

### **4. Last week's Santa Fe City Hall action**

We were pleased with the turnout at the press conference ("[Citizens Protest Possible Nuclear Weapons Agency Presence in Major Santa Fe Development](#)," Jan 14, 2020) at City Hall on the 15th. Trish counted 55 people there, and a few more came later. The press treated us kindly ("[Anti-nuclear protesters oppose LANL's midtown campus proposal](#)," *Santa Fe New Mexican*; "[Anti-nukers rally against NNSA proposal for Santa Fe campus](#)," *Albuquerque Journal*, both Jan 15, 2020).

Prior to the press conference three of us met with the Mayor. We had a cordial discussion. The Mayor was constrained by law from discussing the procurement process or the merits of the applicants so he didn't, but he did hear us out.

We do however have the general idea, from impressions gained on multiple occasions, that the Mayor sees LANL's possible roles more positively than we do. We know some of the developers do as well -- a profound understatement, most likely.

We do not like this Midtown project as it is currently conceived. Our more fundamental critique, and possible alternatives, do not fit in this email. We can discuss this further on Thursday.

### **5. What are these pits for?**

See the [LASG friends ltr](#) of January 13, 2020, item 5.

### **6. Bring the troops home! Global Day of Protest Saturday, Jan. 25**

We know of four locations in New Mexico but there may be others (where is Santa Fe?). Here they are:

- **Albuquerque, NM**  
2:00pm at Kirtland Air Force Base (intersection of Gibson & San Mateo)
- **Taos, NM**  
12 Noon at 102 Paseo Del Pueblo Norte
- **Las Vegas, NM**  
1:00pm at Old Town Plaza gazebo
- **Peñasco, NM**  
12 Noon at The "T"

*Protests such as these are not enough. We all know this. We need to nonviolently escalate our resistance and constructive efforts, organizing our own lives and efforts under different banners as may suit us -- meanwhile discussing, agreeing, disagreeing but agreeing to disagree, respectfully continuing the conversation as we are able, until we find ourselves in a new place of inner and outer freedom, respect, and awareness. We do not think this is utopian at all.*

### **7. Meet Michelle Matisons, Research Associate**

We are pleased to announce that Dr. Michelle Renee Matisons is working with us full-time, as Research Associate. Michelle brings to us a wide variety of research, teaching, journalism, and organizing experience and is wading into the nuclear swamp with gusto (alligators beware). We will post a short version of Michelle's bio on our web site in the next day or two; her [Counterpunch](#) oeuvre is [here](#). Michelle will be with us on Thursday if



you come -- so do!

In her spare time last week Michelle penned this useful article that bears directly on Santa Fe's Midtown project: "['Opportunity zone' tax breaks shown as duplicitous development schemes across the country](#)," Michelle Matisons, *Multi-Briefs*, Jan 17, 2020.

#### **8. Billboard coming**

Stay tuned: we have a new billboard at the printers. We'll have a press release Friday.

#### **9. Don't forget to write the Midtown Project evaluation committee: No LANL in Santa Fe, not as master developer, not as tenant**

Contact information was provided on [Action Sheet 1 for the Midtown Campus Project](#). You can use these [talking points](#) also. On Thursday we will bring up another set of talking points, on a deeper level. Hopefully the horrific prospect of NNSA as Master Developer will be in the rear-view mirror by then, and we can focus on the problem of LANL-as-tenant.

There's a lot else to say but this must suffice for tonight. Please do write the committee, and/or write letters to editors (LTEs).

Greg Mello , for the Study Group

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Press release 14 January 2020

## Citizens Protest Possible Nuclear Weapons Agency Presence in Major Santa Fe Development

### Press conference and demonstration at noon Wednesday, January 15, Santa Fe City Hall

Contact: Lydia Clark, 505-501-2606; Greg Mello, 505-265-1200 office / 505-577-8563 cell

**Santa Fe and Albuquerque** -- At noon tomorrow, January 15, at the Santa Fe City Hall ([map](#)), the Los Alamos Study Group will be holding a press conference and demonstration regarding the City's [Midtown District](#) project.

We have chosen tomorrow because it is the day on which the City has said it may announce the finalists for "Master Developer" of the 64 or more acre site.

[Seven entities](#) have applied to be Master Developer, including the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), the nation's nuclear warhead agency. NNSA manages Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), some 37 road miles to the northwest.

Regarding this project the Mayor's message to potential developers says ([e-page 8](#)):

*We have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to collect great ideas that will create a new urban center of activity and also represent the soul of Santa Fe. We can create a place that is truly Santa Fe: our history, our people, our beauty, and our spirit.*

Lydia Clark, Study Group Outreach Director:

**"We cannot see how these ideals -- 'urban center,' 'soul of Santa Fe,' 'our history, our people, our beauty, and our spirit' could ever be compatible with NNSA or LANL participation. We cannot for a minute see how any presence of NNSA or LANL in this project meets any of the criteria, purposes, or values set forth in the City's [Solicitation](#).**

The "development types" ([e-pages 11-12](#)) and "business types" ([e-pages 13-14](#)) essentially preclude NNSA or LANL participation. "Administrative office only" business uses are not allowed; any LANL prototyping, laboratory, engineering, or manufacturing support functions would require security arrangements that would be functionally incompatible with other project criteria and activities. The City's criteria for businesses include "creat[ing] a town center" ([e-pages 12](#)), but the physical security needed by LANL would preclude any "town center" from developing.

The project "vision" is one of "an essential hub of Santa Fe reflecting the city's heritage and culture where all residents are invited to live, work, play, and learn."

NNSA and LANL do not reflect either the city's heritage or its culture; neither can contribute to a development where "all residents" will ever feel welcome, let alone "work, play, and learn."

Clark again:

**"LANL and NNSA do not represent sustainability or sustainable innovation. During their long presence of LANL in New Mexico, most of the State has not reaped the supposed benefits. What portion of the money allocated by Congress to LANL that actually enters the economy of New Mexico does so only in a "trickle-down" manner, exacerbating inequality and creating no actual economic and social development for society as a whole.**

**"Most of rural northern New Mexico (and much of urban New Mexico) remains paralyzed in a culture of poverty, with few good employment options, poor educational outcomes, poor access to health care, and few prospects for improvement. Food insecurity is at an all-time high. LANL represents the antithesis of the political values and priorities which could lift New Mexico. LANL consumes vast resources for nuclear weapons design and production instead.**

**"There is always a lack of safety and accountability at LANL. Plutonium pit production (pits are the cores of nuclear weapons) is currently scheduled to increase dramatically at LANL. LANL and NNSA have both stated in their proposals the need for housing and office space to accommodate this expansion, as well as deal with challenging commuting issues, with '1,000' new personnel to be hired annually for the next several years. Omitted in their statements is that these increased needs are solely for the purpose of increasing nuclear weapons production and design.**

**"NNSA and LANL have been poor managers in the past, creating hazardous working conditions and many failed projects**

and environmental violations, which have led to a permanent legacy of contamination. There is no indication that any of this has changed -- or even can change.

"LANL/NNSA's presence in the Mid-Town project will continue to support only a very small group of people, not the community as a whole, and will create even more instability and inequality.

"Congress will not change LANL's mission in the direction of "technology transfer" -- as if there was much technology at LANL that could or should be transferred. LANL has always had a single primary mission, but over the past 20 years the nuclear weapons share of DOE funding at LANL has risen to nearly 80%, with most of the remaining 20% supporting that primary mission."

Study Group director Greg Mello:

"For more than 400 years, Santa Fe has been identified with Saint Francis. It is the "Royal City of the Holy Faith [*Santa Fe*] of Saint Francis of Assisi." And there have been [25 years' worth of formal City resolutions](#) more or less against nuclear weapons passed by successive City councils and mayors. If now for the first time, Santa Fe accepts nuclear weapons in its Midtown proposal by welcoming the agencies which build them, thus weaving these weapons into the fabric and identity of Santa Fe, it will be enormously consequential not just for Santa Fe, but for the entire world.

"Bringing nuclear weapons into Santa Fe would be corrosive of our traditions and culture, our creativity and the spirit of tolerance and openness to the world that are the very soul of Santa Fe. Two competing visions of Santa Fe would contend in two "plazas," one with a beautiful cathedral devoted to a man of peace and the patron saint of ecological harmony, the other supporting weapons of mass destruction in one way or another. This would be a disaster for Santa Fe's reputation, identity, and attractiveness to visitors. It would harm, not help, our youth.

"Innovation? LANL and NNSA are largely stuck in the past, fighting yesteryear's wars, forever re-solving variations of the same problems. LANL primarily innovates in narrow fields, nearly all of them classified. The list of LANL spinoffs is short and disappointing. There is very little fully-civilian research at LANL. LANL's mission is not economic development or technology transfer. Its mission is making nuclear bombs.

"We do not know the outcome of the City's deliberations. We hope the City does not include NNSA or LANL in its Master Developer finalists, and hope we have occasion to praise the City for this decision.

"This organization is directed toward a culture of peace, not war, in New Mexico. Regardless of tomorrow's decision we aim to continue this campaign until there are binding prohibitions against nuclear weapon activities in Santa Fe."

\*\*\*ENDS\*\*\*



# Los Alamos Study Group



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January 13, 2020

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**This letter: Reminder: please come and recruit your friends to the press conference and demonstration outside Santa Fe City Hall at noon on Wednesday Jan. 15 ([map](#)); more**

Dear New Mexico friends –

## 1. Please help us recruit for Wednesday's press conference and demonstration

As we explained in yesterday's letter and [previous ones](#), on Wednesday the City of Santa Fe will announce the finalists for "Master Developer" of the former College of Santa Fe site and possibly some surrounding lands.

While it seems absurd that the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) could be a possible "master developer," we can't be sure what this City Administration wants. NNSA and Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) are apparently present in some (not all) other proposals as tenant(s).

**Getting people there on Wednesday is the most important thing we can recommend to do in our immediate region right now for the sake of nuclear disarmament and future of the region.**

## 2. Leading Democrats seem to love plutonium pits more than environmental knowledge, protection, and impact mitigation

Our two senators, Congressman Ben Ray Lujan, and Governor Michele Grisham [had nothing to say](#) when asked by the Associated Press if they support further environmental analysis prior to expanding pit production at LANL. They are waiting for NNSA talking points later this week. We are glad their environmental hypocrisy is finally getting some attention.

## 3. Workshops next month

We are scheduling in-depth workshops on NNSA's and LANL's efforts to build a pit production facility in Los Alamos while greatly expanding LANL for the sake of designing and now building new nuclear weapons. LANL has not seen such a huge proposed expansion, involving thousands (net) of new staff and some \$13 billion in capital improvements and new buildings, since the early 1950s. So far:

- In Jemez Springs, Sunday, February 2, 1-4 pm, Jemez Springs Public Library, 30 Jemez Springs Plaza ([map](#)).
- In Taos, February 4, time and place TBD.

## 4. Last week's Santa Fe City Hall action

It was an excellent event, one where -- as is always the case -- reality was illuminated by each speaker in a unique way. Some who didn't speak quietly held signs, making a total presence of a dozen or so.

LANL was the only issue brought up in public comments.

We thought the City Council paid respectful attention, though the Mayor seemed annoyed.

As mentioned last time, the Midtown Campus decision process is open-ended, fluid, and uncertain -- *and for now closed to formal public input*. With your help we are creating democratic opportunities. We are just beginning.

We see the Midtown process as part and parcel of building a wider culture of peace -- and very closely linked with halting construction and operation of a new plutonium pit factory in Los Alamos. We think that for the nuclear weapons enterprise, trying to set up shop in Santa Fe will be a bridge too far.

The *Santa Fe Reporter* ("[Opposition to LANL's Midtown bid grows](#)," Jan 8, 2020) filed a supportive story.

## 5. What are these pits for?

In a nutshell, and to correct some recent NNSA statements, plutonium pits are needed in the 2030s solely to field all-new warheads of a (new) type and (increased) number (several hundred) that will enable future breakout from current deployment levels should a future administration desire to do so -- say, to signal "resolve" in tensions with Russia. (Resolve for what? Omnicide?)

Got that? These pits are "needed" solely for new nuclear weapons and to allow, if desired, uploading of more warheads than are deployed right now.

They are not needed to increase "safety." They are not needed because of "pit aging." We have enough modern warheads of the exact right kind to take care of those problems, which aren't really serious anyway.

Of course, retiring all silo-based missiles would be the simplest and best solution.

As it happens -- just coincidentally of course -- "surging" with round-the-clock pit production at LANL to make these new pits starting in 2023 and then ramping up quickly also makes possible --

- this new warhead (cost: >\$15 B);
- a new missile system (cost: ~\$85-140 B);
- the whole package helps sustain two nuclear weapons physics labs, the "clean lab" (in CA) and one the "dirty lab" (in NM); as well as
- one engineering lab (in NM); as well as
- five other testing and production sites; plus
- federal administration.

It adds up to "real money." Think of what that would buy for this country.

Without these pits, the U.S. warhead complex *would have very little to do in the 2030s*. The Navy has already said it does not want any new warheads. Nevertheless NNSA is planning to [hire an extra 20,000 workers](#) over the coming 5 years, on top of the existing 41,000 -- a mad flurry of activity.

## 6. Talking points

Lydia prepared these [talking points](#) for our Jan. 2 workshop in Santa Fe. You can use them in your letters to officials. (For now, let's concentrate on getting as many people there at noon on Wednesday as possible. We need to concentrate our efforts!)

We will devote the next letter to more.

In the meantime we have to ask -- *what will our story be?*

Because those of you who spoke last Wednesday touched upon, in different ways, the momentous choice involved as the City of Santa Fe contemplates reversing 400 years of identification with Saint Francis as well as [25 years of formal City resolutions](#) to, for the first time, possibly *support nuclear weapons and weave them into the fabric and identity of Santa Fe. It is an enormously consequential decision not just for Santa Fe, up to now a City of Peace, but for the world.*

In this decision, two worlds contend -- two stories, two worldviews, two normative orders, two identities, two ways of ordering society.

## 7. Two worlds in collision -- what will our story be?

We might call it, "St. Francis vs. Plutopia." Which will it be for Santa Fe? What do we value?

One way or another, this collision was what concerned several speakers at City Hall last Wednesday.

This was what Ohkay Owingeh elder Herman Agoyo, with whom we frequently met in those years, questioned in a 1993 talk, entitled "Who Here Will Begin This Story?" I would like to quote him at length:

*When I was a young boy my grandfather told me, "That place in the mountains is a blessing." I was very familiar with "The Hill" as it was known in those early years, because my aunt and uncle lived and worked there. They frequently arranged "passes" for family members to visit "The Hill." I interpreted grandpa's statement to mean "The Hill" meant jobs, education, and new opportunities.*

*It has been nearly fifty years, and as my grandfather and the years have passed, as Los Alamos National Laboratory has carved its place into the people and the land of New Mexico, a different understanding grips us. What shall I tell my grandson?*

*The promise of jobs and development has not truly benefited us. Yes, people weren't as hungry as before, some were able to buy cars and trucks, but for the most part, the poor people, Indians, and Spanish were and still are at the bottom of the work ladder where advanced science and the highest technology positions are rewarded for the very few. The vision of "education" has also been an elusive entitlement. Approximately 30 percent of our young people do not finish high school and the majority who do graduate end up with an 8th grade level education, and consequently they are derailed in so many preventable and cruel ways from the best technical and leadership opportunities. Worse, our children are never systematically taught the most important and complex truths about the world they live in, truths that are needed to instill a sense of clear purpose and decision-making confidence in our human society.*

*The "opportunities" have also turned to ashes. We have slowly realized that this work which started out to harness an unimaginable*

power has in fact harmed human beings and the planet beyond any calculation. It has harmed us all by the sickness, death, and destruction that has been the ultimate product of this work. It has harmed us by the nightmare fear instilled in the hearts and minds of all the world's peoples about nuclear war and radiation "accidents." It has violated and harmed us by the awful problems of pollution and defilement caused in handling and disposing of the radioactive materials dumped onto and into Mother Earth.

The most important truth about Los Alamos National Laboratory is that it has always been and still is a secret; a center whose work has always been kept utterly shrouded from the view of the world; a place with no public memory. What do our children know of the Laboratory and what do they care? And if they do not know and do not care because it's just another "adult problem," that is the more reason for them to be indifferent and reject our ways. Then who is left to understand and care?

...

What moves me today is the deep belief that we are entering a new time, a new century, and a new understanding. The epoch of modern war and the national security state is moving into its late, late afternoon. The world's people will no longer tolerate, nor can we afford, the costs of war and rampant inhumanity. Let us not delude ourselves by thinking that the fall of mighty Russia was the result of star wars or our military and scientific superiority. Russia fell because the people were fed up with their form of government, and mind you, modern Russia collapsed without an all-out bloody revolution. We must open our eyes to a way to find a refreshing and energetic solution. This evening, I ask you to look at an opportunity that can bring us all together through our children.

If we turn to our children as the source of memory, the repository of what we know as the truth, as the sources of how we are to gather together to cleanse Mother Earth and join to transcend the experience of the last fifty years, I believe we will have a way to transform ourselves. The old way will be hard to break, change will come slowly. A new generation will have to be taught a new way of harmony, mutual respect, common interest, and love for each other and the planet.

Let us make a commitment here, this weekend, to mount a sharing of all stories, first to the youth in our communities, and then increase the circle of participation among all the children in our state and country. If the children understand what we have done here, if the children hear our passionate plea for their active participation in all aspects of how we are to move forward together with this land that belongs to their children's children's children, we will have begun the most important miracle of all. Memory and meaning go hand in hand.

Who here will begin this storytelling with the Indian tribes? Let us call together our best storytellers, our most passionate teachers, and our most creative media artists to this sustained work as the beginning of the true cleansing that we must perform.

My grandson and my grandfather count on me. Yours count on you. Let us form the circle together.

St. Francis prayed, "Lord, make me an instrument of your peace." Some in Santa Fe and our senators' offices are praying, "Government, make me an instrument of your wars."

And with that, civilization comes to an end -- even before the third bomb is dropped. As would the social, economic, and cultural development of Santa Fe, if we let that be our story.

We have to choose. Now that NNSA wants to build a plutonium factory in our midst, we can't kick The Bomb down the road any longer.

The choices for a Santa Fe "meta-narrative" in a time of ecological emergency boil down to life vs. death, biophilia vs. the death cult. Compare the [Canticle of the Sun](#) to Oppenheimer's self-identification, "I am become death, the destroyer of worlds." ([video](#)).

Generation vs. genocide.

Sustainability and resilience vs. instability and the threat of extinction.

Politically, administration vs. democracy.

Russell Hoban's fine post-apocalyptic novel *Riddley Walker* features a central story that is canonical to the characters in the novel, called "The Eusa Story." The Story concludes with the "Littl Man" -- who is the "Addom" Eusa split after killing the "Hart of the Wud" -- questioning Eusa, whose lust for power has caused the death of millions, including his own wife and children.

The Littl Man sed, Eusa wut is the idear uv yu? Eusa cudn say enne thing. The Littl Man sed, Yu doan hav tu say wut it is. Jus say *if* it is. Eusa stil cudn say enne thing.

Eusa has no communicable story -- no "public memory," in Herman Agoyo's terms. No purpose.

Eusa sought "Chaynjis" but got more than he bargained for, with no end in sight for this pitiful shell of a man.

Eusa sed, How menne Chaynjis ar thayr? The Littl Man sed, Yu mus no aul abowt that I seen yu rite thay Nos. down in the hart uv the wud. Eusa sed, That riting is long gon & aul thay Nos. hav gon owt uv my myn I doan remember nuthing uv them. Woan yu pleas tel me how menne Chaynjis thayr ar? The Littl Man sed, As menne as reqwyrd. Eusa sed, Reqwyrd by wut? The Littl Man sed, Reqwyrd by the idear uv yu. Eusa sed, Wut is the idear uv me? The Littl Man sed, That we doan no til yuv gon thru aul yur Chaynjis.

In the absence of an heroic story, one true to the reality of our situation on this planet and to our common humanity, Santa Fe and the region will be as rudderless and pathetic as Eusa.

However *with* such a story, and the political commitment that goes with it, people can pull together toward something worthwhile. Everyone can have a job. Agoyo: "A new generation will have to be taught a new way of harmony, mutual respect, common interest, and love for each other and the planet....Memory and meaning go hand in hand.";

Santa Fe already has such a story. It should not be thrown away.

Thank you for your attention and --

**Please help us recruit attendees for Wednesday!**

Greg Mello

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[^ back to top](#)

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# Los Alamos Study Group



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January 12, 2020

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**This letter: Press conference outside Santa Fe City Hall at noon on Wednesday Jan. 15 ([map](#)) -- please come, and please recruit others**

**Dear New Mexico friends –**

As we have explained in previous [letters](#), Wednesday is the day on which the City will announce the finalists for "Master Developer" of the former College of Santa Fe site (and possibly surrounding properties as well, a 64- to ~100-acre project). The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) has applied for this role. NNSA and/or Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) are present in some (not all) other proposals, as tenant(s).

The situation is opaque, fluid, and developing. So far, Mayor Webber has disdainfully rebuffed our requests to meet or discuss the momentous social, cultural, and economic development impacts of placing a nuclear weapons campus in Santa Fe. (Don't be deceived -- that is exactly what LANL is and what this would be.)

People power may be the only force stronger than LANL's money and corruption. We really need you to help us expand our numbers.

If you live *anywhere* nearby please come to this joint press conference, and please ask as many friends to come as possible. Sheer attendance matters. A strong showing Wednesday will save countless hours of work later, and will give wings to efforts to push back on LANL's entirely unjustified expansion. There are many powerful people in Washington who know LANL specializes in taxpayer ripoffs. Some of them need to see some spine from us out here to take to their bosses.

New Mexico is being selected to be a nuclear weapons support and sacrifice area. That now includes the Santa Fe metro area.

We may not know the outcome of this first Midtown Campus decision by noon Wednesday but regardless of that we must seize the day.

While it seems absurd that NNSA could be a possible "master developer," we can't be sure that Mayor Webber and the people around him wouldn't want that -- or want, say, a training facility for plutonium workers. We just don't know.

This event will also give us a chance for us to network with each other and with representatives of any other groups present, as well as speak to any City officials willing to do so.

**Getting people to come on Wednesday is the sole action item we are recommending right now. It is very, very important!**

Thank you!

Greg, Trish, Lydia, Ernie, Michelle, and the rest of the Study Group

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# Los Alamos Study Group



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January 7, 2020

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- Previous Letter (1/3/20): [Demonstrate tomorrow, Jan. 4, in Albuquerque, 2 pm: illegal US assassination of top Iranian general dramatically inflames region](#). Last month's letters are linked at the bottom, for background.
- Previous Bulletin (12/23/19): [Please help us work this coming year! Also: important meetings Jan 2 & 8 in Santa Fe: Pope Francis and The Bomb](#)
- **This letter: [No LANL in Santa Fe! Join us tomorrow, Jan. 8, at 6 pm at Santa Fe City Hall; more](#)**

Dear New Mexico activist friends –

**First**, if you live nearby please join us tomorrow, Wednesday, January 8, at 6 pm at the Santa Fe City Council meeting at City Hall ([map](#)).

This will be the last City Council meeting before the City decides which applicants will be the finalists for "Master Developer" of the City's 64-acre [Midtown District](#) and possibly other surrounding lands. The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), which builds U.S. nuclear warheads, has applied for Master Developer. Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), our local nuclear bomb lab ([that does little else](#) and [can do little else](#)), figures in at least one proposal as a partner or tenant as well.

We will meet outside the City Council chambers for an hour or so before the evening session, in preparation for citizen comment under Item F on the [agenda](#), "Petitions from the Floor." **There are no other formal opportunities for public comment prior to this decision.**

Our demand is simple: **[No LANL in Santa Fe!](#)**

We brought [talking points](#) to our Jan. 2 meeting. NNSA and LANL meet none of requirements for Master Developer, and so we expect to win this first round. What embodied moral force we can bring out tomorrow, in our bodies, will be momentum toward the next challenge -- *keeping a satellite nuclear weapons administrative, engineering, and training center out of Santa Fe*.

**Second**, please contact others to bring as many people as possible to the meetings tomorrow (ours and the Council's). Not everyone need speak at the latter, but a show of force will make everything easier from this point forward.

**Third**, please [write letters, op eds](#) if possible (Willem Malten's: "[Grab the opportunity to make a difference](#)"), and call the Mayor and City councilors. (Handy contacts and background were provided in our December 12 [update](#)). Meet with them if you can. They may say they can't discuss these proposals, which is fine, *but they can and should listen*.

There is no question that the Mayor has already met with LANL representatives during or just preceding this process. His initial response to us, on the other hand, is that he cannot meet. We need to make sure he and the councilors understand the gravity of this issue, and just how negatively LANL's presence will affect the viability of any proposal that includes it.

Tomorrow's [ACTION SHEET](#) is now posted.

**Fourth**, if you live nearby please come at noon on Wednesday, January 15 to the Santa Fe City Hall ([map](#)), where we will have a demonstration and joint press conference. We can't know the outcome of the decision, or exactly *when* on the 15th it will be announced, but as it is a work day and we also need to give the press time to write, noon it will be.

This will also give us a chance to network among each other and with representatives of other groups present.

**Fifth**, we are scheduling in-depth workshops on NNSA's and LANL's efforts to build a new "Goldilocks"-sized Rocky Flats plutonium plant in Los Alamos and to greatly expand LANL, for the sake of designing and now building new nuclear weapons. LANL has not seen such a huge proposed expansion, involving thousands (net) of new staff and some \$13 billion in capital improvements and new buildings, since the early 1950s. So far:

- In Jemez Springs, Sunday, February 2, 1-4 pm, Jemez Springs Public Library, 30 Jemez Springs Plaza ([map](#)).

In Taos, February 4, time and place TBD.

**Sixth**, tomorrow NNSA will publish its **decision** to \*NOT\* conduct further National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis for its pit production program. We are "**shocked, shocked**." A comparable decision -- to avoid further NEPA analysis -- is likely at LANL as well. We must challenge both.

NNSA is flying blind, and at the same pulling the wool -- if only it was as organic as that -- over local officials' eyes.

If our senators, Governor, or Congressman Ben Ray Lujan demanded a Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement (SWEIS), it would happen.

And if our senators demanded a Supplemental Programmatic EIS (SPEIS), *that* would happen, contrary to tomorrow's decision. But they haven't. They want to rush pit production forward, without further environmental analysis.

From this point forward, all local government and civic leaders who silently sit on their hands are part of the problem. We need to wake them up.

We sent these quick comments to a few newspapers:

This decision favors ignorance over knowledge and planning. It strikes a blow against good science, good engineering, and good government. NNSA is trying to rush into pit production for purely ideological and pork barrel reasons, an approach very likely to fail.

NNSA does not want to expose the contradictions in its pit production plans to further scrutiny by the public, tribes, affected governments, Congress, or even by other NNSA and DOE programs, some of which will suffer as a result of the rush into pit production.

Much more is known now than in 2008 about the impacts and risks of NNSA's pit production plans. None of this new knowledge is supportive of NNSA's plans, which are proceeding without the required environmental analysis of reasonable alternatives.

Many of NNSA's 2008 assumptions turned out to be optimistic. At LANL for example, NNSA assumed it could use a new \$6 billion nuclear facility to help produce pits. That facility was never built.

Either NNSA has not learned that NEPA helps vet bad policy choices, or else NNSA knows it is making a bad choice and hopes to brazen its way through, as some in DoD have advised.

NNSA sees opposition, but not the facts behind that opposition. Those facts -- of geology, topography, location, of NNSA's own failures to date, of infrastructure limitations, and of a rapidly-changing planet earth -- aren't going away.

As of at least mid-November, and despite clear legislative reporting requirements, NNSA had no clear idea how to proceed with its pit production plans at LANL in particular, the first site at which industrial pit production is supposed to take place.

Especially in this administration, NNSA obeys laws selectively, thumbing its nose at Congress and now at our nation's foundational environmental law. A new plutonium pit production plan involving multiple sites in multiple states, with ramifying effects on transportation and on waste management at *all* DOE sites that produce, store, or dispose of transuranic waste, inherently requires programmatic analysis under NEPA. To repeat, much has changed since 2008.

This decision also violates a legal settlement to which this organization was a party. NNSA is therefore also thumbing its nose at the courts, and to the parties in that prior litigation, with whom it made a solemn agreement. We will challenge this decision, to the best of our ability.

Our comments on the [draft "Supplement Analysis"](#) (the final version will be published tomorrow) are [here](#) and [here](#).

**Seventh**, these pit production plans are our main local contribution to the war machine that is producing the war Trump is intensifying so criminally in the Middle East. Pit production is a big part of New Mexico's way of saying it will never lead on climate mitigation, or toward making our communities resilient. This is a binomial choice, friends, a choice between two whole worlds of meaning and authority, narrative, morality, and possibility (*nomos*, in the Coverian sense). We see the struggle against nuclear weapons -- in our midst, and growing in social, political, and economic influence -- as identical to the struggles against the extinction of nature and an increasingly ruthless politics of disposability.

There will be another antiwar action [Saturday in Santa Fe](#). I am sure there are other local protests as well. A global day of action has been declared for January 25, local details TBD. New developments good and bad are occurring hourly, and we can't burden this letter with them.

We urge you to get involved, and get nonviolently serious. Mere protesting will not be enough to mitigate any of our converging crises, this growing war and the extinction crisis included, but at and through these protests, *which will hopefully grow to halt business as usual in this country*, we can build and deepen relationships and political strength. We need to understand and live, as best we can, the essential unity of all serious resistance and constructive programs. The greater the nonviolence, the greater the moral, persuasive force.

Greg, for the Study Group

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Last month's local letters

- (12/31/19): [Reminder: workshop & training Thursday January 2, Santa Fe](#)

- (12/22/19): [Important meetings January 2 & 8](#)
  - (12/12/19): [No LANL in Santa Fe -- update](#)
  - (12/07/19): [Please come tomorrow to Collected Works Bookstore, 202 Galisteo Street, Santa Fe, 11 am: Developer to present plans for Midtown Santa Fe campus: will they include nuclear weapons research, training, manufacturing, administration?](#)
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[^ back to top](#)

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# Los Alamos Study Group



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January 3, 2020

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- Last month's local letters
  - (12/31/19): [Reminder: workshop & training Thursday January 2. Santa Fe](#)
  - (12/22/19): [Important meetings January 2 & 8](#)
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  - (12/02/19): [Safety Board: Los Alamos plutonium facility does not adequately protect the public](#)
- Previous Bulletin (12/23/19): [Please help us work this coming year! Also: important meetings Jan 2 & 8 in Santa Fe: Pope Francis and The Bomb](#)
- **This letter: Demonstrate tomorrow, Jan. 4, in Albuquerque, 2 pm: illegal US assassination of top Iranian general dramatically inflames region**

Dear New Mexico activist friends –

The Study Group is joining number of antiwar and social justice groups locally and across the US in emergency demonstrations tomorrow, Saturday, at 2 pm at Kirtland Air Force Base (specifically, the corner of San Mateo and Gibson Blvds, [map](#)) in Albuquerque. Groups sponsoring include Stop the War Machine, Popular Resistance, Code Pink, UNAC, Answer, International Action Center, Veterans For Peace, Los Alamos Study Group, Voices for Peace and many others.

If you don't live in Albuquerque perhaps you will find another way to join the nationwide expressions of disgust where you are.

Any demonstration like this is a short-lived thing, of little value in itself. But it can be a start.

This latest U.S. act of war is [illegal](#) even by degraded U.S. standards, let alone international ones. Some quick background:

- [Fear of a Major Mideast War](#) (Joe Lauria, *Consortium News*)
- [U.S. Will Come To Regret Its Assassination of Qassim Soleimani](#) (*Moon of Alabama*, "MoA")
- [US Assassination Of Top Iranian Military Official May Ignite World War](#) (Caitlin Johnstone)
- [US Kick Starts Raging '20s Declaring War on Iran](#) (Pepe Escobar, *Consortium News*)

Yesterday's strike comes on the heels of a previous air strike on Shia militias in the Iraqi army (Background from the valuable MoA: [After U.S. Strike On Iraqi Forces Its Troops Will \(Again\) Have To Leave](#) and [What Will The Trump Administration Do When Iraq Asks U.S. Troops To Leave?](#)).

You will notice the absence of major mainstream media in this list. I usually don't have time to parse the truth from the lies and strategic omissions in the typical *New York Times* or *Washington Post* story. Cable and broadcast news, including PBS and NPR, are even worse.

Now there is a third strike ([Iraq official says airstrike targets Iran-backed militia](#), AP).

As Caitlin Johnstone put it at the link above,

And now, as I sit as the mother of two teenagers watching what might be a third world war looming on the horizon, all I can think is about how infuriating it is that we've spent the last three years on Russia bullshit and sectarian political infighting instead of building an actual cohesive antiwar movement and pushing real opposition to Trump's warmongering.

We need to talk about U.S. militarism, urgently. Tomorrow is a good place to start, at this demonstration and after. If you live nearby, hopefully we will see you there.

Greg, for the Study Group

[^ back to top](#)

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