



Department of Energy  
National Nuclear Security Administration  
Washington, DC 20585



July 30, 2010

Mr. Thomas M. Hnasko  
Hinkle, Hensley, Shanor & Martin, L.L.P.  
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218 Montezuma  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

Dear Mr. Hnasko:

I have been asked to respond to your July 1, 2010, letter to the Secretary and the Administrator regarding the Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Replacement Nuclear Facility (CMRR-NF).

The Los Alamos National Laboratory's (LANL) role in meeting the mission objectives of the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) includes providing a wide range of scientific and technological services that include nuclear materials handling; processing and fabrication; stockpile management; materials and manufacturing technologies; nonproliferation programs; and waste management activities. As a result, LANL must be able to handle actinide and other radioactive materials in a safe and secure manner in order to protect the workers, members of the public, and the environment. The recently released 2010 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) led by the Department of Defense and endorsed by the President stated that *"By modernizing our aging nuclear weapons-supporting facilities and investing in human capital, we can substantially reduce the number of stockpiled nuclear weapons we retain as a hedge against technical or geopolitical surprise, accelerate the dismantlement of nuclear weapons no longer required for our deterrent, and improve our understanding of foreign nuclear weapons activities."*

As you know, the existing CMR building is well over fifty years old and so near the end of its useful life that it has been necessary to impose restrictions on some of its operations. As you also know, the CMR's ability to continue to fulfill its evolving mission in a safe manner was the subject of the 2003 environmental impact statement (CMRR EIS, DOE/EIS-0350) you referred to in your letter. As a result of the analysis contained in the CMRR EIS and other considerations, including public comment, the NNSA decided in its 2004 record of decision to replace the CMR with the CMRR. The NPR specifically concluded that the CMRR was a key investment required for this evolving mission. We note that the potential environmental impacts of the proposed CMRR have been considered in other National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analyses (the 2008 LANL SWEIS (DOE/EIS-0380) and the 2008 Complex Transformation SPEIS (DOE/EIS-0236-S4)) as well as the CMRR EIS.



We recognize that there have been changes proposed to the CMRR since the 2003 CMRR EIS was completed and the 2004 record of decision issued. As a result, NNSA will be preparing a supplement analysis pursuant to 10 C.F.R. 1021.314(c)(2) to assist it in determining whether the CMRR EIS should be supplemented, a new environmental impact statement should be prepared or no further NEPA documentation is required. The Department will make its determination and the supplement analysis available to the public. To ensure that the Los Alamos Study Group's concerns are accorded consideration in the supplement analysis, I am forwarding your letter to the Los Alamos Site Office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donald L. Cook", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

DONALD L. COOK  
Deputy Administrator  
for Defense Programs

cc:  
Silas DeRoma  
Los Alamos Site Office