

Los Alamos Downwind Neighbors (Janet Greenwald)

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Comments on NMED's draft WIPP permit modification

I raised my children in one of the small, semirural communities surrounding Los Alamos National Labs. The children they grew up with who worked at the labs have all passed now, leaving their families and community without the presence and energy of these wonderful people in their prime.

These communities, who provide LANL with many of its workers, are also facing other problems caused by the labs: pollution of the regional aquifer by Hexavalent Chromium, historic air contamination of land and agricultural products by the Cerro Grande fire and the constant threat, in these arid times, of forest fires igniting the thousands of drums of radioactive wastes stored at LANL in tents.

The New Mexico Environment Department has advocated for relief for these communities for many years with little progress being made. Now, the NMED is drawing a line in the sand: Clean up or stop shipping radioactive wastes to WIPP from other states

Do we see these rural communities as an important part of who we are as New Mexicans or are they just collateral damage for whatever benefits the nuclear industry bestows on the state? This is the question that is being answered by this permit modification: All our communities are important and we as a state will stand up for them against the sometimes seemingly uncaring federal government and its often damaging policies.

An example of this lack of concern for these communities is the federal government's allocation of billions of dollars to manufacture plutonium pits at the labs while cutting clean up allocations. This move to manufacture more plutonium pits comes as the world community, through the United Nations, has declared nuclear weapons to be illegal and the Catholic Church, immoral. Another is the abandonment of important cleanup projects because they might interfere with the manufacturing of pits. Another is neglecting to address community concerns about emergency preparedness.

As a group, Los Alamos Downwind Neighbors supports NMED's hard line enforcement of clean up at Los Alamos Labs as stated in the amendment to WIPP's permit proposed by the New Mexico Environment Department and including the following provisions:

- From January 1, 2027 through December 31, 2031, at least 55% of the total volume of all waste must be LANL legacy waste.
- Beginning January 1, 2032, at least 75% must be LANL legacy waste.

- Legacy waste at LANL Material Disposal Area-G must be shipped by July 1, 2028.
- If requirements are not met, all non-LANL shipments stop until corrected.

Sincerely,

Janet Greenwald

For Los Alamos Downwind Neighbors

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