

**Recommendation to the Department of Energy
Los Alamos Site Office**

No. 2009-09

Northern New Mexico Citizens' Advisory Board

**Support for Community Outreach on Environmental Management Education and
Training Provided by Los Alamos National Laboratory**

Background

The Northern New Mexico Citizens Advisory Board (NNMCAB) has established a Community Outreach Ad Hoc Committee (called CABCO) to develop and execute innovative approaches to fulfill one of the NNMCAB's mission statements:

“The responsibility of the Environmental Management Site Specific Advisory Board (EM SSAB) at Northern New Mexico (the Board) is to provide meaningful opportunities for collaborative dialogue among the diverse multicultural communities of Northern New Mexico, the Department of Energy (DOE), the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), and state and federal regulatory agencies.”

The NNMCAB recognizes that the need to make substantial progress in cleanup efforts at LANL requires the citizens of Northern New Mexico be informed and gain confidence in the cleanup efforts. Our mission statement further ensures community dialogue:

“The Board ensures early ongoing community access to information (and its interpretation and implications) and dialogue that improves the quality of the decision-making process of DOE and LANL.”

The NNMCAB's CABCO has developed some candidate programs to inform the citizens through local educational organizations. Candidate programs may also provide training opportunities for local citizens to obtain high-paying jobs in environmental cleanup of LANL. These programs are also designed to obtain feedback from our citizens on recommendations for improving the NNMCAB's mission with LANL.

The State of New Mexico, and its citizens, have been supportive of the Department of Energy (DOE) and the programs which are working to clean up the legacy waste at LANL and other facilities across the United States. New Mexico also provides the sole permanent repository, Waste Isolation Pilot Project (WIPP) for the nation's Transuranic (TRU) Waste. The DOE Office of Environmental Management (DOE EM) may increase its ongoing support of the training and education of NM Citizens to better understand the environmental management issues related to cleanup of legacy waste and the environment in which we live. Such increased support would give confidence to the

local citizens in the cleanup work, which DOE EM is undertaking at LANL. Such training and education also would enable NM citizens to participate in the cleanup efforts at LANL.

Comment

The NNM CAB has long sought to develop effective ways to communicate with the general public on the often complex requirements, evaluations and options for solutions to environmental restoration work of legacy waste sites at LANL. In accordance with our mission, DOE and LASO could do much more in Northern New Mexico to improve “early ongoing community access to information (and its interpretation and implications)” by providing support and interaction with local educational institutions for environmental management instruction and information related to the cleanup program at LANL. Working with our local educational institutions could do much to promote “dialogue that improves the quality of the decision-making process of DOE and LANL.” Such dialogue with students and parents to discuss the “interpretation and implications” of LANL environmental data may improve the confidence our citizens have in the cleanup efforts and overall reduction in the long-term risk to the environment. The decision-making process for cleanup of legacy waste at LANL must be based in part on an informed public that understands how to mitigate the current and future risks to the environment and to our health.

The NNM CAB is very enthusiastic to provide recommendations on the content and approach to the Los Alamos Site Office (LASO) on developing specific programs to promote this community outreach and education in the Northern New Mexico communities represented by the NNM CAB.

Recommendations:

1. The NNM CAB recommends that LASO request funding sources for the expansion of such community outreach programs to be administered by LASO for the benefit and education about our environment for the citizens of Northern New Mexico.

Intent

The intent of this Recommendation is to improve the effectiveness of community outreach by the NNM CAB, DOE EM and LASO in Northern New Mexico. Such support of environmental education and dialogue by DOE in Northern New Mexico will provide increased opportunities for our citizens and promote good will between New Mexico and DOE. These objectives are essential to the missions of both the NNM CAB and the DOE.

Effect

The effect of this Recommendation will be to accelerate and help achieve the community outreach mission of NNM CAB, DOE EM, and LASO to provide better understanding of

NNMCAB Recommendation 2009-09
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and confidence in the decisions and risk reduction efforts for the cleanup of legacy waste at LANL. These programs are designed to provide the opportunity for the community of Northern New Mexico to become more interactively involved in future cleanup activities at LANL.