



Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

December 10, 2012

Mr. Carlos Valdez, Chair
Northern New Mexico Citizens' Advisory Board
94 Cities of Gold Road
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87506

Dear Mr. Valdez:

Thank you and the Northern New Mexico Citizens' Advisory Board (NNMCAB) for recommendation No. 2012-02, "Expand the Mission of the NNMCAB to Include Advice and Recommendations on the Evaluation and Use of Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) as it pertains to the Disposal of Legacy Non-TRU Radioactive Wastes from Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) and Around the Complex."

We agree with the NNMCAB that discussions on expanded use of WIPP or use of other facilities for waste disposal should involve the public and, particularly, people who could be affected by EM activities within a region. DOE is actively engaged with communities around the WIPP site consistent with good practices of community involvement. The agency welcomes any input that you might have on community involvement across the state. All recommendations pertaining to community involvement around WIPP will be conveyed to the WIPP manager.

Although there is currently no Citizen's Advisory Board representing the region surrounding WIPP, there is a very active community base in both Carlsbad and Hobbs, New Mexico. These communities currently provide feedback to the department on items concerning WIPP operations, budget, safety, compliance and the future of WIPP.

If the NNMCAB wishes to provide recommendations on the disposition of waste from the Los Alamos site, it may do so within the current scope of its work. The EM SSAB Charter provides for board recommendations on all of the following: clean-up standards and environmental restoration; waste management and disposition; stabilization and disposition of non-stockpile nuclear materials; excess facilities; future land use and long-term stewardship; risk assessment and management; and clean-up science and technology activities.

On behalf of Dave Huizenga, thanks again for your thoughtful recommendation and all of your efforts on behalf of the NNMCAB and the EM program. If you have any questions concerning this response, please let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Catherine Alexander".

Catherine Alexander
Designated Federal Officer
Environmental Management Site-Specific
Advisory Board



cc: David Huizenga, EM Senior Advisor
Ed Worth, Deputy Designated Federal Office, NNM CAB
Ralph Phelps, former NNM CAB Chair
Paul Seidler, EM Director of External Affairs
Melissa Nielson, Alternate Designated Federal Officer
Joe Franco, CBFO Manager