



DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
National Nuclear Security Administration
Los Alamos Field Office
Los Alamos, New Mexico 87544



MAR 31 2014

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

Dear Mr. Valdez:


The Los Alamos Field Office thanks you and the Northern New Mexico Citizens' Advisory Board (NNMCAB) for submitting Recommendation No. 2013-09, "Recommendation for Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) Clean-Up Funding," and recognizes the NNMCAB's concern for assuring sufficient funding for Department of Energy (DOE) Environmental Management (EM) clean-up, particularly funding to complete the 3,706 Campaign and Consent Order requirements. The Board's engagement in the process of securing funding and ensuring successful EM clean-up efforts is greatly appreciated.

The Field Office during the last year has been diligent in actively engaging DOE EM Headquarters to develop and document a fully supportable budget request for fiscal year (FY) 2014. The benefit of this synergy has been substantial for the EM program. Under the recently approved Omnibus Spending Bill to fund the federal government for the rest of FY14, the Los Alamos Environmental Management (EM) base program was funded at \$224.8 million, a significant increase over previous years funding levels. The Field Office is encouraged by this level of funding for FY14 as it will ease funding and schedule constraints and give the Field Office the opportunity to meet clean-up activity requirements including the compliance driven Framework Agreement 3,706 Campaign and the Consent Order with the State of New Mexico.

The Los Alamos Field Office and the DOE Headquarters continue to be aware of the implications of funding constraints stemming from across the board federal budget cuts, continuing resolutions, and sequestration actions. While the Field Office can't predict the future, it remains committed to working with DOE Headquarters to make every possible effort to secure appropriate funding levels in future years to ensure clean-up efforts are on task and schedule. The Los Alamos Field Office does commend the NNMCAB and the Chair for forwarding this recommendation to the National Chairs' meeting for consideration.

Thank you for your continued focus and drive to support our ever-important environmental clean-up mission.

If you have any additional questions or concerns regarding the response to this recommendation, please contact M. Lee Bishop at (505) 606-1804.


Kimberly Davis Lebak
Manager

Enclosure: Northern New Mexico Citizens' Advisory Board for Recommendation No., 2013-09,
"Recommendation for LANL Clean-Up Funding"

cc w/enclosure:

Douglas Sayre, Vice-Chair
Northern New Mexico Citizens' Advisory Board
94 Cities of Gold Road
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87506

K. Davis Lebak, OOM, NA-LA
P. Maggiore, EPO, NA-LA
R. Pfaff, EPO, NA-LA
D. Nickless, EPO, NA-LA
G. Rael, NSM, NA-LA
M. Santistevan, NNM CAB
J. Mousseau, ADEP, LANS, MS-K788
D. Cox, ADEP, LANS, MS-K788
Records Center, NA-LA
Official Contract File, NA-LA

EPO-32CH-579-560787

NORTHERN NEW MEXICO CITIZENS' ADVISORY BOARD (NNMCAB)
Recommendation to the Department of Energy
No. 2013-09
Recommendation for LANL Clean-up
Authored by Carlos Valdez

Background

Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) has several areas and levels of responsibility. For example, they are instrumental in scientific inquiry: regarding nuclear deterrence, national security, reducing global threats, fostering energy security, health research and development, and environmental management, to name just a few. LANL's annual budget is just over \$2.1 billion, and the EM budget is between \$188 and \$212 million annually.

The protection of human health and the environment from legacy hazardous and mixed waste produced by past LANL operations should be the top priority for LANL, as well as the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED), the Department of Energy (DOE), and the Northern New Mexico Citizens' Advisory Board (NNMCAB). To date, clean-up efforts, as they relate to Legacy and Cold War efforts in and around LANL, have been on time and within budget, due mainly to deadline extensions granted by NMED. The current focus of clean-up is the 3706 Campaign, which is on track to be completed by the summer of 2014.

Observations and Comments

Over the past several years, the federal government has made several budget cuts to programs around the country. In addition, it also continues to operate under "continuing resolution" and other "sequestration" conditions. This has slowed the progress of clean-up efforts around the country; LANL included, and has put sites at jeopardy of not meeting regulatory deadlines.

- The inability to meet regulatory deadlines in the investigation and cleanup of legacy waste sites enhances the probability that regulatory agencies will impose large fines, which then diverts crucial funding from actual clean-up efforts.
- Operating under these continuing resolutions and sequestration conditions increases the risk to human health and safety and to the environment as a whole. This also presents the possibility of using clean-up funds to pay fines.
- Clean-up funding should have special dispensation from federal budget cuts, sequestration and continuing resolution, when it lowers the level of funding needed to meet regulatory deadlines. EM funding should be held harmless when these conditions are present.

Recommendation

This Board recommends to DOE that all EM funding for LANL should be held harmless as it relates to across the board cut-backs in federal programs, operating under Continuing Resolutions and Sequestration. Federal budget cuts should not include funding for remediation or clean-up.

Intent

It is the intent of this Board to make every possible effort to protect and secure the best possible funding scenario of EM budgets to ensure clean-up efforts are not slowed or put in jeopardy.