





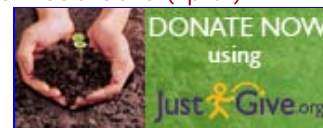
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BULLETIN #95

Subject: Please RSVP and attend LANL's public discussion of its proposed plutonium warhead core ("pit") factory annex

June 7, 2010



Dear friends, colleagues –

Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) – which is run by a *privately-held, for-profit* corporation called Los Alamos National Security, LLC, lest we forget – and its owner the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) are now beginning to publicly unfold their plans for a new, mostly-underground, plutonium bunker/lab/processing plant, the Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Replacement Nuclear Facility (CMRR-NF).

Construction could start as early as this fall.

If you want to get involved in this issue, our [CMRR web page](#) contains quite a bit of useful information and commentary. There are several new articles there since we last communicated with most of you, in mid-May. More will be coming, very soon. You can peruse the materials there to compile talking points, develop your own questions – or, if you work for NNSA, you can see why you should halt this project altogether. No part of it merits construction, and the case against CMRR-NF just gets stronger all the time, the deeper we look.

If you want to be more involved in this issue – and for a few reasons why you might, keep reading – please [email Trish](#) and let her know of your interest in a line or two. There is plenty to do and it is possible that we here in the office can link you with other like-minded people in your area. If you live in New Mexico, especially in Rep. Ben Ray Lujan's congressional district, or near our office, there is plenty to do if you are sufficiently interested.

Here is [Congressman Ben Ray Lujan on the subject](#) (mp3 file, thanks to a good question by Jeanne Green of Taos, recorded and posted by Robin Collier of [Cultural Energy](#)). Here's a transcript of part of that interview.

As you look to see what needs to be done to manage the stockpile, I know there has been a lot of conversation around this as well. We have to manage the stockpile. And we have physicists and scientists and nuclear engineers that play that role, that partner up with other NNSA (National Nuclear Security Administration) facilities like Sandia and Lawrence Livermore, and we have them in Los Alamos, and so to see what we can truly do from a scientific perspective to manage that stockpile and meet the President's goals I think that we need to do, and I think that making investments and supporting efforts where we can make sure we are moving nonproliferation forward in a very aggressive ways under President Obama, we're seeing activity move places and ways we've never seen before and that's what we need to try to do and I'm going to be supportive of moving the nonproliferation agenda forward, making sure we're able to recycle, making sure we're able to break down the spent fuel rods, the nuclear waste in a way that's more than in the past -- its been stuck in the ground. We have to do that and that's something that I'm committed to.

Say *what?* More discussion with Rep. Lujan is clearly needed on this topic. Not just he, but all the New Mexico congressional delegation is in favor of this project so far. (Senator Bingaman took credit as the original promoter, so it's appropriate to call this

"Bingaman's Folly.") This situation will last exactly as long as we allow it to last.

LANL has now begun its public relations push for this project. For example, LANL will host a very important construction job forum on June 16 in Espanola. Many of you should strongly consider attending. It is an opportunity for education in your communities, for your own political organizing, for networking and mutual education. If you want to go to this forum, and again we suggest that you do, you should [RSVP](#) as soon as possible.

Here's the [LANL press release](#) and here's a more complete write-up from another source:

Los Alamos National Laboratory will update industry and the public on upcoming construction efforts at the laboratory and unveil a new Web site dedicated to the projects at a June 16 forum in Espanola, N.M. The event will take place from 10 a.m. to noon at the Santa Claran Hotel. The jewel of the lab's construction effort is the multi-billion dollar Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Replacement-Nuclear Facility, which will shift much of the work done in the World War II-era Chemistry and Metallurgy Research facility at a cost that could approach \$4 billion. There are other projects scheduled for the lab as well, however. A recent plan to use third-party financing to build a science complex for the lab was scuttled, but the lab and the National Nuclear Security Administration remain committed to the project, and the lab's MaRIE facility (Matter-Radiation Interactions in Extremes) is anticipated to be a center for research into materials and energy, though it's still in the very early stages of development. Much of the new construction is focused around the lab's controlled Pajarito Road corridor, and the forum is expected to provide information on doing business with the lab as well as about the projects. "At the forum, leaders from the laboratory and the Los Alamos Site Office of the National Nuclear Security Administration will present information about the projects, procurement processes and opportunities, and other important information," the lab said in a statement. A Web site will also be unveiled that will provide up-to-date information on lab construction projects. For more information about the event, contact the lab's Community Programs Office at (505) 665-4400. Seating for the forum is limited: RSVP to: rsvp-lanlcommunityforum@lanl.gov.

Don't forget to RSVP!

Sources tell us that LANS (i.e. Bechtel, mostly), is fighting hard to keep overall control of this project and the fees it will generate for them. Much could be said about the overall structural situation here, but clearly the idea is to direct a new \$4+ billion stream of taxpayer money up "The Hill" while the rest of the country scrambles to make ends meet, pay doctor bills, and so on. Ultimately, if these priorities hold, the rest of the country will "fail to thrive" while LANS does just very fine, thank you.

This is not just a meeting about CMRR-NF but the first clear exchange in a new debate about the future of the state.

Three things make the present moment, and this issue, unique and important: 1) the enormous scale of the proposed project, 2) its particularly absurd and perverse nature, and 3) its timing, occurring just when we must prepare to transition to a post-peak-oil, climate friendly, and post-imperial existence.

I can't say it enough -- there has never been a project even remotely this big in this state since the interstate highway system was built. If LANL's projections are correct, we will get something in the vicinity of 1 direct job per \$10 million spent. Whatever the precise number, why so few? Because a lot of the money flies away fast to buy things from elsewhere, and much of the part that is to be spent here is spent on six-figure salaries, and because of the predatory profit ("fee") chain, and so on.

We wonder if there is likely to be another \$4 billion in federal money for any big new infrastructure initiatives in New Mexico for the duration of the project (i.e. until past 2020). For New Mexico, this could be "it" – a defining moment which decides who we are and what we do, or don't do.

"We" are making quite a bit of implicit energy policy in this decision, and climate policy, and we are setting the loyalties of our congressional delegation and helping establish or solidify our identity as a state. Enchantment or entombment, take your pick.

Nationally, there is an increasing collision between military spending and social programs. Of course it's been going on all the time but next year, after the elections, all indications are that efforts to cut social programs will get much fiercer. This is part of that contest. A bellwether and a microcosm of the whole, and it is *our* part of that struggle. These social programs are far more important to New Mexico, and to the New Mexico economy, than are the labs.

This is surely the decade in which we must invest strongly in things we need, because, economically speaking, "the end is (very likely) near" for our debt-ridden empire, for reasons we have discussed and clarified together in several dozen public discussions over the past few years. We have to start that transition now, or we just won't be able to make the big investments that can stabilize our life-in-the-land at a dignified level.

We are at the fork in the trail – it's the *Jornada del Muerto* for us – or perhaps at last we will choose the *Jornada de Vida*. Heaven and earth are indeed called to witness, in ways we could hardly have imagined, and life and death are indeed set before us to choose between, just like the old book says. (Or as Erich Fromm interpreted, *having* and *being*.) The tomb-like nature of the building we are

being taxed to build makes it all so terribly plain, doesn't it?

We need your help to defeat this monstrosity, and we need it now. Call Trish for special arrangements or donate [here](#).

Greg Mello, Trish Williams-Mello, Darwin BondGraham

To subscribe to this listserve, send a blank email to lasg-subscribe@lists.riseup.net.

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