

Santa Fe: City of Peace — or of War?

The City has become a key enabler in Trump's nuclear "domination" agenda.

How did we get to this point and what can we do about it?

This and previous ads in this series are at <https://lasg.org/LASG-ads.html>. We know that only a small percentage of you will read what we write here. We simply know of no other way to get this message out to you. If, after considering what we write here, you decide you want to act, the last page provides some suggestions. Details and references are at lasg.org.

Did you know?

Citizens of Santa Fe, who are uniquely powerful in this regard, are largely in the dark about the \$30 billion (B) factory for the cores of nuclear weapons ("pits") slowly taking shape on the mesas of Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL). The financial scale of this effort is 20 times that of the Manhattan Project in New Mexico, in constant dollars. It is by far the largest project ever attempted in the state.

Every minute, LANL spends roughly what it costs to install a home solar system. In a month, that's every home in Santa Fe. In a year, most of the state.

Our news media are not covering it.

No new pits are needed to maintain U.S. nuclear weapons. The pits to be made are for new, additional warheads.

LANL's factory is to be based primarily in a 50-year-old building and numerous supporting facilities. A second factory – larger, newer, with better safety and security – is also being built in South Carolina, but it will not be ready until 2035.

Not a single federal study ever supported using the old LANL building as a factory. Overall project costs have risen by a factor of 10. Impacts to the region are growing – water use, housing costs, traffic congestion, ugly urban sprawl, labor costs and unavailability, and of course nuclear waste.

What is not happening is the "economic development" sought by the New Mexico delegation, which fought for this factory. Do you see it? We do not. We see growing inequality, congestion, and unaffordability.

LANL has meanwhile grown to be the best-funded facility for weapons of mass destruction in the world, its growth largely driven by pit production.

Some 12,000 people now commute to Los Alamos County every day. LANL's now-grotesque scale requires an increasing share of the housing and skilled labor of the entire region.

What is perhaps most shocking about all this is that even from the perspective of committed nuclear "hawks" it is an entirely unnecessary and optional effort, driven by ideology and greed. The ideology is

that the U.S. can and should seek nuclear "dominance"; the greed is for pork-barrel spending, corporate profit, and personal gain. The risk of nuclear war is very real.

One nuclear weapon can kill a million people; a dozen can kill a large country. The U.S. has more than 5,000, all told. The present effort has nothing to do with any sane definition of "national security," and flies in the face of treaties the U.S. has signed.

Military bloat, including nuclear weapons, is bleeding us dry

Military spending this year falls between \$1.5 and \$1.8 trillion (T) – that is, between \$11,100 and \$13,300 per U.S. household – depending on what is included. Large increases have been requested from Congress for next year, which if passed would take total U.S. military spending into the \$2 T range, with the per-household cost rising accordingly.

Within this, the U.S. is spending \$87 B on nuclear weapons this year. The White House has asked for \$98 B next year.

Lost opportunities

These huge numbers represent staggering opportunity costs for human beings and the planet.

Jobs? Military (including nuclear weapons) spending creates many times fewer jobs than comparable investments in the civilian economy of useful goods and services, infrastructure, and education. It is blindingly obvious that New Mexico's nuclear labs have not enriched the state. The labs embody spending priorities which impoverish this state.

Even with its huge debt, the U.S. is still a rich country – but look around. LANL spends \$13,000 per minute of every day – nearly all on nuclear weapons. Where's the "economic development?" Despite – or because of – nearly \$300 billion in nuclear weapons spending over the decades, New Mexico is now the new Appalachia, the bottom of the barrel in children's welfare overall.

Why do we have such messed-up priorities? Let's ask President Eisenhower, on his way out the door in 1961:

"In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist."

Nuclear dominance? Please.

Madness has overcome the barons overseeing U.S. nuclear weapons. As a result (and as a cause) the contractors which do 98% of the warhead work are in a kind of feeding frenzy.

With the absurd and impossible "nuclear dominance" now LANL's mission, no amount of money will be sufficient. This story will end badly. Let's not make it ours.

Making LANL weapons production "great again," with local subsidies

From 1949 to 2018, LANL did not have a full-fledged pit production mission. After

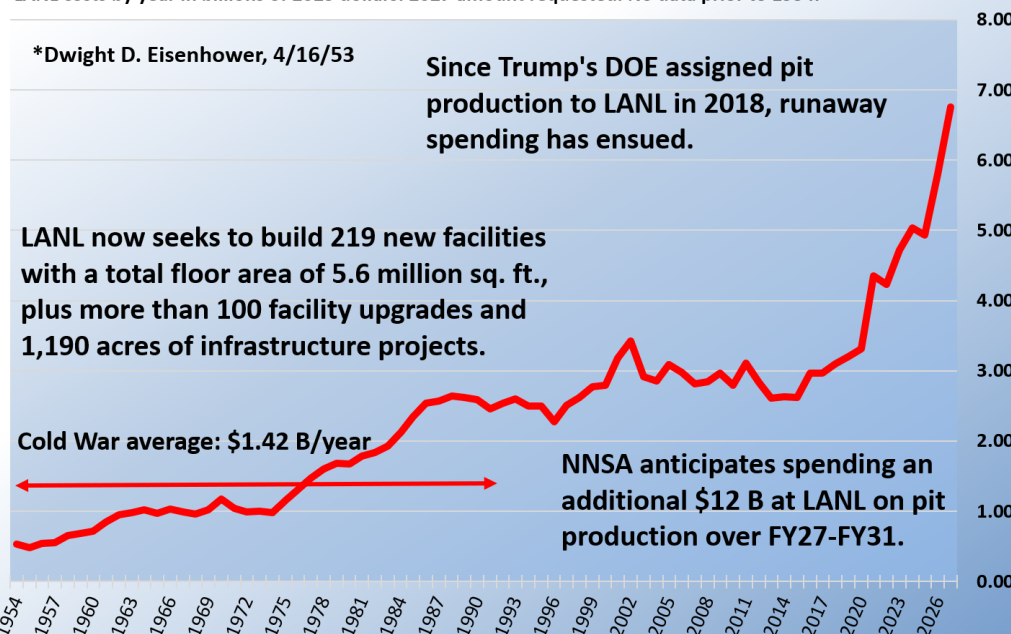
failing four times to establish one, the first Trump Administration ordered LANL to cram pit production into LANL's old plutonium facility. Three work shifts are necessary for this. Thousands of additional workers were and are still being hired. As a result of this and other factors, housing costs have risen dramatically across the region, causing hardship for renters and new homeowners, who are in effect subsidizing LANL and the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA).

Send the men in white coats

"Our overarching imperative is to forge a nuclear security enterprise with the agility and resilience to prevail in an era of renewed great power competition." (NNSA, "Responsive Today, Dominant Tomorrow: Enhancing American Nuclear Dominance," Feb. 11, 2026)

"A theft from those who hunger and are not fed."*

LANL costs by year in billions of 2025 dollars. 2027 amount requested. No data prior to 1954.



Among other initiatives, we have proposed a City resolution objecting to the production of nuclear warhead cores (“pits”), and opposing additional nuclear weapons facilities in Santa Fe

The text in black (paragraphs 1-17) is the argument, meant to be educational. The paragraphs in blue (18-21) are the actions. Online at <https://tinyurl.com/yb8cv7np>. [See next page for ways to help.](#)

1. **RECALLING** that the City of Santa Fe (City; full name, “The Royal City of the Holy Faith of Saint Francis”) is named for the “holy faith” of Saint Francis of Assisi, whose faith led him to become a man of peace and nonviolence in thought, word, and deed; and

2. **RECOGNIZING** the signal importance of Santa Fe’s historic identification with ideals of human dignity and peace, and conversely the moral and reputational damage that would accrue if the City were seen as supportive of, or complicit in, the further refinement and production of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) such as nuclear weapons; and

3. **RECALLING** that in February of 2005, the City became a member of Mayors for Peace, endorsing a goal of peaceful transformation toward a more sustainable world, including the goals of eliminating nuclear weapons while in the meantime promoting a culture of peace, not war; and

4. **FURTHER RECALLING** that the city of Santa Fe has previously declared its unconditional opposition to the production of plutonium warhead cores (“pits”) at LANL in resolutions 2003-64, 2005-39, 2006-104, and 2008-17; Resolution 2005-39 in particular establishes the identity of the city of Santa Fe as supporting and leading in nuclear disarmament; and

5. **OBSERVING** that eight decades of lavish federal spending at LANL have not fostered equitable social and economic development, including the most recent decade in which LANL spending and employment roughly doubled;

6. **OBSERVING** that in February of this year, the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), the Department of Energy’s semi-autonomous nuclear weapons agency, distributed a management directive mandating among other things that LANL double its target rate of pit production from 30 to at least 60 pits per year; and

7. **OBSERVING** that in March of this year, NNSA chose what it calls the “Expanded Operations Alternative” for the future of LANL, which involves constructing approximately 219 new facilities with a total floor area of 5.6 million sq. ft. plus more than 100 facility upgrades, plus utility and infrastructure projects covering 1,200 acres, nearly all of which are for nuclear weapons; and

8. **OBSERVING** that in April of this year, NNSA proposed to increase LANL’s pit production budget by 90% for next year, from \$1.3 billion in fiscal year (FY) 2026 to \$2.5 billion in FY2027; overall funding for LANL’s



nuclear weapons programs is slated to increase by 39% year-on-year, and

9. **OBSERVING** that DOE is currently executing a semi-secret effort called “Project Velocity” which involves revising approximately 80 safety and other regulations; total allowable radiation doses to LANL workers are now five times greater than heretofore; and the Secretary of DOE has approved the removal of the “as low as reasonably achievable” (ALARA) standard for radiation exposures; and

10. **FURTHER OBSERVING** that the recent past and expected future growth of nuclear weapons programs at LANL has impelled Congress to require a study of possible future satellite LANL campuses, in order to alleviate the severe traffic and housing problems created by LANL’s growth, which study is to be completed this summer;

11. **WHEREAS**, this unprecedented transformation of LANL includes a full-scale production plant to produce plutonium pits, the fissile cores or triggers for nuclear warheads and bombs, which are weapons of mass destruction (WMDs); and

12. **WHEREAS**, plutonium pit manufacturing is manifestly dangerous to workers and, in the event of serious accidents or intentional malicious acts, to the public and the environment; and

13. **WHEREAS**, even in normal operations plutonium pit production involves extensive production, storage, and transportation of transuranic (TRU) waste and other toxic wastes; and

14. **WHEREAS**, LANL’s main plutonium facility was designed and built more than 50 years ago for R&D purposes only, and is too old and too small for the required pit production mission thus necessitating the concurrent construction of a second, larger, brand-new pit factory in South Carolina; and

15. **WHEREAS**, newly generated TRU waste from plutonium pit production, according to NNSA, has been and is being prepared and shipped for disposal at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP), often with priority over the legacy TRU waste long stored at LANL’s Area G in tents; and

16. **WHEREAS**, in addition to the international law already in place at the time of Resolution 2005-39, 100 countries have signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which prohibits the possession of nuclear weapons for state parties; 75 of which have concluded their respective ratification and accession processes; and

17. **WHEREAS**, nuclear weapons activities at LANL have caused permanent environmental contamination and desecration of ancestral tribal lands,

including sacred sites.

18. **NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE CITY OF SANTA FE** that the governing body, on behalf of its constituents, states its opposition to all plutonium warhead core (“pit”) production at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL);

19. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Governing Body opposes, within the limits of state and federal law, the expansion of LANL activities in the City of Santa Fe;

20. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Governing Body calls on the New Mexico Congressional Delegation to:

a. **Oppose** further preparations for quantity plutonium pit production at LANL;

b. **Oppose** all plutonium pit production at LANL, limiting any production activity to the lowest level consistent with technology demonstration and training only;

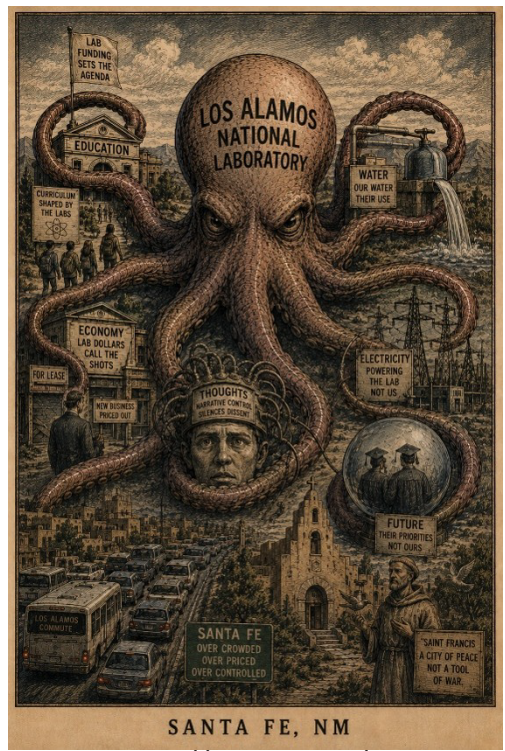
c. **Oppose** the Trump Administration’s new requirement for LANL to produce at least 60 pits per year;

d. **Remove** the current statutory requirement to produce at least 80 pits in 2030 and prevent other new statutory pit production requirements;

e. **Prioritize** the removal and disposal of legacy plutonium waste from LANL over the production of additional such waste from nuclear weapons activities, including pit manufacturing and preparations for pit manufacturing;

f. **Work** to decrease the level of federal spending currently allocated for nuclear weapons activities;

21. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Governing Body directs the City Clerk to send copies of this resolution to the members of the New Mexico congressional delegation, the Governor, the Secretary of the Department of Energy, the Administrator of the National Nuclear Security Administration, and the Secretary General of the United Nations.



Bigger: <https://tinyurl.com/5avycu56>

Frequently asked questions

Q. If successful, wouldn’t this effort cost people their jobs?

A. No. LANL is already currently losing about 1,000 staff members per year, which it more than replaces with new hires. Those who want to stay can stay. Attrition is faster than policy change. The number of subcontractor jobs would gradually decline. Yet even without growing further, LANL wants to replace 2.8 million sq. ft. of existing facilities. There will be plenty of construction.

Q. How can a non-binding City resolution affect nuclear weapons policy, and also benefit Santa Fe?

A. First, it signals to key lawmakers and executive branch officials in Washington, DC that there is resistance to the pit mission here. Right now, they see only support, embodied in the New Mexico delegation. Nuclear decisionmakers are right now deciding the scale of production and fate of the two pit production factories currently under construction. The cost of this “two-site plan” is fantastically large – far larger than anything NNSA has ever done before. Cuts are likely - but where? Pit production at LANL will either shrink — or grow. LANL’s proposed production has already more than doubled over the 2017 plan and could increase much further, with vast environmental, social, political, and moral impacts.

Second, a resolution will affect worker morale and retention. Remember, to make pits requires convincing a large number of people to work (for some, through the night) with highly toxic materials under strict security in a giant tomb-like building. Every pit made would be the core of a new warhead that could incinerate a whole city. Pit production at Los Alamos, supported by Santa Fe’s silent assent, is the rate-limiting step in the new nuclear arms race. Willing workers are required.

Third, opposition to the new arms race could be part of a process of renewal in Santa Fe. It would help make Santa Fe a real City of Peace, not of war. Doing LANL’s bidding is in many ways the path of least resistance and creativity. Instead of training young people in pit production (as the SF Community College will soon be doing in the City’s Midtown Campus, unless there is a change of heart), it could and should be training them in renewable energy and many other “arts of life.”

William Blake’s angry lament applies: “And all the Arts of Life, they have turned into the Arts of Death.” We can and must reverse this. An active commitment to real peace is dynamic, creative, and in tune with Santa Fe’s identity and traditions.

Q: Shouldn’t we just focus on making LANL safer, say by going slower?

A: LANL only has the pit mission because it is willing to go fast, with loosened safety standards. The “slow” pit mission is in South Carolina. “Safety” is in any case a mirage when it comes to nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons are not “safe” nor will they ever be. By 2015, LANL had already seen more than 1,600 occupational-related deaths, according to the Department of Labor. Compensation to sick LANL workers, plus death benefits to families, totals about \$2.7 billion so far.

Q: Isn’t it foolish to think that citizens and local government could stop a large federal “defense” program like this?

A: Not at all. First, citizen opposition has played a significant role in stopping this same mission at LANL three or four times before, starting in 1990. In 2012, opposition from the Study Group ended what a bipartisan commission called the nation’s most urgent nuclear warhead infrastructure project: a new pit factory building at LANL. The failure of that project “erased a decade of Integrated Nuclear Planning virtually overnight” according to LANL and resulted in decade-scale delays and/or outright cancellation of multiple planned warheads.

More FAQs, possible ways to help, upcoming events

“Does the individual know that he is the makeweight that tips the scales?” (C. G. Jung)

Frequently asked questions (continued)

Second, LANL is a terrible place to build and operate a plutonium factory, among the worst in the country. The site is subject to earthquakes and fires and has very limited land area for new construction and parking. Road access is severely limited. Mass transit on a large scale is infeasible. Los Alamos County lacks the several thousand housing units it needs for its workforce. LANL's plutonium facility is small, old, and crowded with other important missions. Physical security of the LANL site is essentially impossible. By many measures, LANL has already outgrown its site.

Q: Doesn't the Santa Fe City Council have more important things to worry about?

A: No. In the now-distant past, the City Council required only 30-60 minutes to pass strong resolutions against LANL pit production. Those helped inspire opposition, which was successful. We do not envision this resolution as at all burdensome. Many of the problems the City faces – especially housing affordability, homelessness, and sprawl – are worsened by its growing role as a bedroom community for an expanding LANL. A new arms race makes climate stability, social justice, and fiscal responsibility impossible.

Q: Isn't it more important to fight against the big AI data centers?

A: We believe it IS important to fight against them. But understand that LANL requires ever-larger computers and now also AI. In many ways LANL IS an AI center, with a lot of other nasty stuff as well.

LANL projects that its potable water usage will grow by 86% to 1.38 million gallons/day, which is roughly 68 times the projected water usage of the proposed Project Jupiter data center.

Q: Isn't it more important to work with Congress than locally?

A. Both must be done, in multiple ways. They go together. Decisions about policy and funding are obviously made in Washington, not New Mexico. Yet the NNSA, which owns and funds LANL understands – as do the Pentagon, the military, and key members of Congress -- that regional support is crucial for success. Pit production would be politically impossible in most places, as it should be here as well. Congress, for its part, has become increasingly dysfunctional. For the past decade there has been very little congressional oversight of NNSA programs. Congress has taken a hard turn toward militarism, support for wars, and the formation of enemies.

Q: Won't this situation get better if Democrats win the midterms, take over Congress, and later win the White House?

A. It's hard to say, but generally no. New Mexico Democrats (Heinrich, Udall, Lujan, Grisham) are the ones primarily responsible for bringing pit production to LANL over the initial objections of NNSA. Both major parties support wars, genocide, and huge investments in nuclear weapons. Quite a few Democrats and Democratically-linked NGOs want LANL to be the nation's pit factory.

Q: Aren't there dozens of other things we should be worried about at this time?

A. Yes, there are. We must think and act comprehensively, which means whole-heartedly. We are all in this together. We ourselves are the quantum of political and moral change we seek. Every barrier is an opportunity. Stay positive and you'll see them. One candle lights the way.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Call or write Santa Fe city councilors you may know or who represent your district, or write all of them. Tell them the issues that concern YOU most about LANL's expansion and its new nuclear production mission. Find their contact information at santafenm.gov.

Call or write Geralyn Cardenas, City Clerk and Director of Community Engagement, asking for her help in moving this resolution forward, at gfcardenas@santafenm.gov.

Come and speak at Santa Fe Governing Body meetings, in person (preferred) or virtually on October 14th and 28th, both Wednesdays, at City Hall, 200 Lincoln Ave. “Petitions from the floor” usually start at 7 pm. It is best to come early. Speakers have 2 minutes. Make a sign or use one of ours. We will send your words widely.

Come to our joint press conference outside Santa Fe City Hall at 11 am, Oct. 19th. Use the occasion to inspire your creativity and show it. Help us make this event fun as well as serious. We are in this for the long haul, after all.

Endorse, individually or as a business or organization, the “Call for Sanity, Not Nuclear Production, at StopTheBomb.org (or use the QR code below). You will be standing with hundreds of others. **If you do this, you will be able to get issue updates and hear about upcoming meetings and other action opportunities.**

Many businesses and organizations would endorse the Call if we had time to ask. Between Washington and New Mexico, we are heavily scheduled. YOU might have that time. You certainly do know people we do not. If you want to help in a straightforward, organic way and at your own pace, make a point to ask them! Use this ad and others preceding it (<https://lasg.org/LASG-ads.html>) as talking points.

On Saturday, Nov. 14th at 11:00 am at St. John's United Methodist Church in Santa Fe, 1200 Old Pecos Trail, we will be celebrating 37 years of nuclear weapons resistance in New Mexico, and some of the many people who have been involved with it. We and our guest speakers will discuss some of the opportunities and challenges ahead. An informal lunch will be served.

If you can, please contribute financially, and ask your friends to do so as well. We do a lot with little, but we'd like to do more, a lot more. Many people reading this ad probably do not know that many liberal donors and NGOs want Los Alamos to make pits. Some powerful people don't want real resistance in New Mexico, which is for them a designated nuclear weapons sacrifice area. This is usually not said out loud. The bottom line is that none of the “usual suspects” are going to help save Santa Fe, or New Mexico, unless we ourselves show our mettle.

We need serious, skilled volunteers. Let us know if you might be interested. Tell us about yourself! Or, if you have ideas and are ready to work we are all ears and will help if we can.



Scan to join “The Call for Sanity, Not Nuclear Production!”

**Los Alamos Study Group lasg.org
2901 Summit Pl NE
Albuquerque, NM 87106**

