



REGIONAL COALITION of LANL COMMUNITIES

City of Española - Pueblo of Jemez - Los Alamos County - Ohkay Owingeh
Rio Arriba County - Santa Fe County - City of Santa Fe - Taos County - Town of Taos

June __ , 2020

Senator Udall, Senator Heinrich and Congressman Lujan,

We at the Regional Coalition of LANL Communities (RCLC) are the elected representatives of nine communities in northern New Mexico located in the vicinity of Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL). As such, we are writing to express to the Congress how important Department of Energy – Environment Management (DOE-EM) funding for legacy cleanup projects in the FY 21 budget is to the lab in particular and to our region more broadly.

Since hosting a DOE facility for over 75 years and supporting its essential mission for our national security and important scientific research, the region is committed to guaranteeing that the issues of legacy defense waste that remain from LANL's important history are properly remediated. This means cleanup of our land, air and water. In addition, thousands of area residents rely on LANL for secure, well paid jobs that provide a standard of living for the region that would not exist without the lab.

As of this writing, the administration's FY21 budget proposes a 45% (\$105,000,000) cut in cleanup activities of legacy waste sites at LANL. In ordinary times, this reduction would be a devastating blow to the vital activities that ensure that legacy defense waste is properly dealt with, and provide much needed economic activity to an economically depressed area, but in this time of pandemic and closure, is likely to result in a devastating economic hit to the region and all of New Mexico.

Over the past three years, DOE EM has spent hundreds of millions of dollars standing up projects and taking over all legacy waste cleanup activities at LANL. A budget cut of such magnitude would undermine these efforts resulting in the wasting of these dollars, cost the American taxpayers much more for cleanup in the long run, and dramatically slow progress on the important work already done on these sites.

The FY 21 budget request for cleanup at Los Alamos was created in close consultation with the state's regulator, New Mexico Environment Department, and includes priorities from the 2016 Consent Order that governs cleanup activities at LANL such as an emphasis on surface and groundwater management and a prioritization of the activities needed to manage the processing and packaging of transuranic legacy waste at Area G. Funding for these much needed priorities will ensure that DOE-EM remains in compliance with the state in its cleanup agreements.

We write today to ask the committee to consider maintaining legacy waste cleanup funding at the FY 19 and 20 levels to ensure that the DOE is doing its due diligence to local communities by pursuing cleanup of legacy waste.

Henry Roybal, RCLC Board Chairman
Commissioner, Santa Fe

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