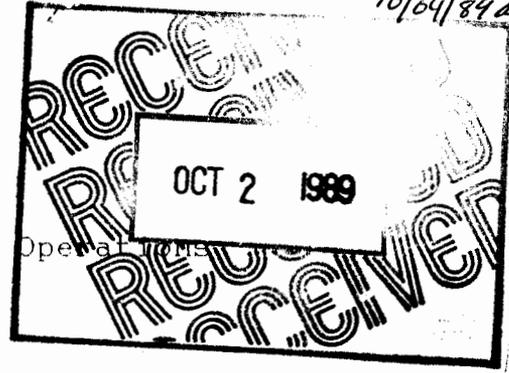


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1989
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September 28, 1989

Mr. George Van Tiem, Associate Director for Operations
Mail Stop A120
Los Alamos National Laboratory
Los Alamos, NM 87544

Hand Delivered

RE: Request for information relating to waste generation by LANL

Dear Mr. Van Tiem:

At our last meeting, on September 14, I read to you and your staff a list of questions that my associates and I had about waste generation and disposition at the LANL. After that meeting, Judy Powers of your staff sent to me some of the material I requested, namely current selected highlights of a few Laboratory programs (called "Research Highlights") and a document entitled "LANL Institutional Plan: FY1989-FY1994." Thank you.

Today I would like to repeat some of the other requests made at our last meeting, which involve information related to waste generation and background information necessary to interpret that information, as well as pose some additional questions.

Some of this information you may have already compiled and can easily provide. Some of it may not be compiled into document(s) that can be specifically named in this request, but which information nonetheless exists in one form or another, perhaps in documents or memoranda written for other purposes. If you have any doubt about the utility of any information in meeting the requests below, please feel free to call either myself or Elizabeth Billups at Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety (see telephone number below). There is no need to provide all the information at the same time, i.e. no need to hold up some information while waiting for other information.

We don't want this request to be in any way burdensome. And if there is anything I or others can do to cut down on your task of providing it, please let me know. For example, some of the information may simply be available in the Oppenheimer Study Center under titles we would have no way of knowing. Where that is the case, a call or letter with the appropriate bibliographic information would be very helpful.

Here is the information we request:

1. Could you please provide a summary of waste generation from each program at the Laboratory, listing both type of waste and quantity? It is not necessary to provide data on the species of purely chemical hazardous waste. Please, however, break down mixed waste and radioactive waste into subcategories, perhaps



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much as was done in the January 1988 U.S. DOE Environmental Survey Preliminary Report. That listing is very helpful, but lacks information about 1) what the programs are that are housed in the buildings shown, 2) how much waste is in each stream, and 3) the actual disposition of the waste. The publication of the DOE audit I mentioned suggests that the information we seek is available. We note that the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act amendments of 1984 require, as part of the permitting procedure, a waste minimization program. The above information is, we think, essential either to implement or review such a program.

2. Is there a summary of waste disposal information that would update the report of Margaret Anne Rogers, published in the late 1970's? What is the current inventory of waste disposed and stored, by volume, by type, by curies of each type, and by location?

3. How much waste of what kinds have been incinerated by the Laboratory in the past? Has all this waste originated at LANL or has some been accepted from other locations? What is the current disposition of the incinerator ash? [Questions not mentioned on 9/14.] Has the Laboratory ever accepted waste for storage or burial from other locations? If so, how much, what kinds, when, and what is the disposition of that waste now?

4. Will the proposed program of incineration at LANL ever involve waste from other sites? [Also a new question.] It will be important to put the answer to this question in writing.

5. How are current waste disposal operations funded? Do they receive a separate appropriation or are they funded by a surcharge on other programs?

6. Have there been any published updates on the hydrogeology of the LANL disposal area since the report by the IT Corporation entitled "Hydrogeologic Assessment of TA-54, Areas G and L, LANL?"

7. Other than laboratory-scale research, what are the activities at LANL involving special nuclear materials? What operations are conducted? What materials are involved and at what scale are the operations conducted (i.e. what quantities of materials are handled, recycled, blended, produced, stored, etc.) How are these materials shipped to and from the Lab, i.e. how often, by what routes, and in what containers? [A new question since 9/14.]

8. Have any accidents occurred involving special nuclear materials? Please give details or provide reports discussing those accidents. Please provide information on any accidents in which workers, the environment, or the public were potentially exposed. [A new question.]

9. To what extent are explosive experiments involving toxic metals still conducted by LANL in situations where these metals can be scattered and aerosolized? What toxic metals, and in what amounts, are involved?

For some weeks now. I have been in oral and written correspondence with Mr. Haarman of your Engineering Division and, since Sept. 19, with Mr. Nunez of DOE about a gridded map of LANL which would allow interested parties to locate past disposal areas using reports previously submitted to the EID. I hope that map is on its way; both the individuals involved told me there was no problem in providing it.

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

greg mello

Greg Mello
Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety
712 Calle Grillo
Santa Fe, NM 87501
986-1973 (CCNS)
982-8315 (home)

cc: Elizabeth Billups, CCNS
Boyd Hamilton, NMEID
Paul Robinson, Southwest Research and Information Center
Myla Reson, Citizens for Alternatives to Radioactive Dumping
Bill Richardson, U.S. Congress
Jeff Bingaman, U.S. Senate
Pete Domenici, U.S. Senate