

LOS ALAMOS SSAB UPDATE

August 17, 1994

BACKGROUND:

In late 1993, thirty-two northern New Mexico public interest groups requested a citizens' advisory board be established to provide input in decision-making at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL). Shortly thereafter, DOE, EPA, LANL and NMED began working with regional public interest groups and later municipal, civic and business leaders to lay the foundation for a Site Specific Advisory Board (SSAB). Seven informal stakeholder-initiated meetings, and one agency-hosted public information meeting, have been held since December 1993.

During informal stakeholder meetings, some level of dissatisfaction had been expressed that DOE and LANL are unable to reach certain cultures and/or geographic populations of northern New Mexico. Those raising these concerns also felt such outreach must occur prior to any formal SSAB convening effort. The concept of parceling out funds to the community for this SSAB outreach has been a consistent topic of discussion during informal stakeholder meetings.

DOE and LANL responded to the outreach concern. LANL formulated a Statement of Work which would lead to a Request for Proposals (RFP) for qualified external parties to develop methods to reach potentially excluded stakeholder groups in northern New Mexico. The resulting contract(s) would encompass outreach for a number of major DOE and LANL issues needing stakeholder involvement, SSAB being only one.

CURRENT STATUS:

SSAB:

- Two informal stakeholder meetings were held after the March 1 public information meeting, the last one on April 21, 1994. The meeting was unable to produce consensus on how to proceed further, whether or not an outside facilitator was acceptable, or a proposed date for the next meeting.
- In late July, DOE, EPA, LANL and NMED staff met to informally discuss how, or if, an effort should be made by these agencies to help facilitate stakeholders' efforts to move forward in establishing an SSAB. Everyone agreed that the agencies should not "push" an SSAB process upon the public; but, that those stakeholders who continued to show an interest in an SSAB deserved a response.
- The agencies have agreed to host another public meeting with stakeholders to ascertain whether there still exists a strong interest in an SSAB and, if so, are stakeholders agreeable to an independent convener for that process. Other items such as criteria for an independent convener, and how to move forward, would also be discussed during the public meeting. NMED will explore whether the facilitator serving the Kirtland area citizens group might be used for this one-time meeting.

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- In preparation for a public meeting, a letter and postcard-questionnaire will be sent to LANL's mail list, asking stakeholders to provide input on their SSAB interest and willingness to participate in such a meeting. The letter, questionnaire and a proposed meeting date have yet to be formulated; however, the agencies will meet again on August 18th to further develop this initiative.
- The probable time-frame for a public meeting is November. This would allow sufficient time for the mail-out and return of stakeholder input, and avoid overlap with the LANL site-wide EIS stakeholder involvement activities during September and October.

RFP:

- After discussion at several stakeholder meetings, a Statement of Work was drafted and released for stakeholder comment in April. Several comments were received and considered, and a formal Statement of Work was released on July 29. The communication asks respondents to contact LANL's Vendor Relations by August 15 for information on receipt of a bid package. As of August 17, approximately 35 requests for bid packages were received.
- The proposal selection panel will include representatives from the Environmental Protection Agency and the New Mexico Environment Department. The process of selecting successful bidders for this outreach activity will continue separate of, but parallel to, any SSAB convening activity which may take place.
- The four agencies will develop selection criteria for the successful bidder(s) and a timeline. It is conceivable that selections could be made and announced concurrent to the November public meeting.
- Coincidental to the above activity, DOE Assistant Secretary Tom Grumbly visited NM on August 9, 1994. During his meeting with senior DOE and LANL management, he expressed strong approval for proceeding with an SSAB for Los Alamos, and encouraged an active DOE and LANL role in pursuing this further.

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