



GARY E. JOHNSON  
GOVERNOR

State of New Mexico  
**ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT**  
*Hazardous & Radioactive Materials Bureau*  
2044 Galisteo  
P.O. Box 26110  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502  
(505) 827-1557  
Fax (505) 827-1544



MARK E. WEIDLER  
SECRETARY

EDGAR T. THORNTON, III  
DEPUTY SECRETARY

October 29, 1996

Ms. Jean Nichols  
Box 237  
Penasco, New Mexico 87553

**RE: Los Alamos National Laboratories Site-wide Environmental Impact Statement**

Dear Ms. Nichols:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Los Alamos National Laboratory's (LANL) Site-wide Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) which I received on October 24th, 1996.

Your letter addresses the SEIS and the need for holding all projects until the SEIS is complete to include the LANL operating permit. First, let me explain that the LANL hazardous waste operating permit does not authorize the initiation of projects at LANL other than those that relate directly to cleanup of hazardous wastes or hazardous waste contaminated sites or the safe handling of hazardous wastes generated and managed at LANL. Hazardous Radioactive Materials Bureau (HRMB) has no authority to approve or disapprove projects at LANL which may or may not produce hazardous wastes. HRMB can only regulate the hazardous wastes after they are generated and regulate the cleanup of contaminated areas. HRMB can also provide information and incentives to LANL to attempt to minimize hazardous waste generation throughout the facility and LANL is attempting to move in that direction.

The SEIS, as I understand it, is intended to address new LANL projects which may have environmental consequences to include hazardous waste generation and the methodologies for addressing the generated wastes and any other potential environmental impacts which may not be related to Resource Conservation Recovery Act (RCRA) regulated hazardous wastes. HRMB's only role during the SEIS development is to comment on deficiencies in the document from a technical or regulatory perspective. The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) can respond to these comments, take the comments under advisement, ignore the comments or utilize the comments to revise the SEIS. HRMB during the SEIS development phase can only comment much the same as any other ordinary citizen at this point in the process. Certainly HRMB staff will review the SEIS and provide comments as necessary to the DOE.



12905

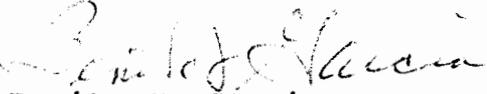
76

Ms. Jean Nichols  
Page 2  
October 29, 1996

I suggest that the Northern New Mexico Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) for LANL provide DOE with their perspective on SEIS issues which they believe may have an impact on the communities of northern New Mexico. This should be based on the perspectives of citizens of the northern New Mexico area which may provide perspectives outside of the regulatory and technical areas which HRMB may provide comment.

Please feel free to contact me at 505-827-1557 should you wish to discuss this issue or have any questions on the statements within this letter. If you have questions on the hazardous waste operating permit and proposed modifications please contact Mr. Stu Dinwiddie or Ms. Teri Davis at 505-827-1558.

Sincerely,



Benito J. Garcia  
Chief

BJB/bjg/dpb

cc: Ed Kelley, Ph.D., Director, WWMD, NMED  
Stu Dinwiddie, Supervisor, RCRA Permits Management Program  
Teri Davis, Geologist, RCRA Permits Management Program