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# PEACE ACTION NEW MEXICO

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**"Local Folks with a National Voice"**

HSWA LANL G/M/CAF

May 13, 2000

Dear Dr. Sewell,

We have appreciated your assistance in the past and are now urgently requesting the help of NMED on the following matter. Thank you in advance for your concern and consideration.

Peace Action New Mexico is concerned about the sincerity of Los Alamos National Lab because it appears the monitoring of possible toxic or radioactive releases have, so far, been in the form of air quality monitoring. We believe, however, that because hazardous or radioactive releases would have been carried in the smoke plumes, is testing currently being done on ground samples of soot and outfall from the fires? It would seem that since all LANL operations are currently shut down, monitoring air quality on and around LANL property alone would not be particularly revealing if it is the only type of monitoring being undertaken.

Most importantly, the smoke debris on the ground should be tested in the canyons around Los Alamos, the Pueblos abutting Los Alamos, Española, Chimayo and Abiquiu. On Thursday, the thickest, most acrid of the smoke plume was dropping black material in those areas. These should also be collected and tested professionally. In addition, since in years past toxic and radioactive material was often dumped in the canyons around Los Alamos which carried the wild fire, those should be tested carefully for toxic waste.

We are asking you, as an agency responsible for the health and safety of all New Mexicans, to proceed immediately and systematically to gather ground samples from all areas effected by the smoke plume and analyze for gamma, beta and alpha radiation as well as hazardous materials like asbestos, pcb's and dioxin.

A major component of the clean-up effort in Los Alamos should be to remove the soot so that when the rainy season comes in July, hazardous waste will not be carried into the Rio Grande river, compromising the water quality for downstream communities.

The citizens in Northern New Mexico, a largely agricultural community, should have the best information that NMED can gather to insure that their crops and soil are not contaminated. Elders, children and animals are most at risk.

Sincerely,

Peggy Prince, Director



13372

cc: Rep. Tom Udall, Senator Jeff Bingaman

72