



LANL (orden) General

Sen. Pete Domenici, R-N.M., left, shares the podium with New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson during a news conference Friday at which they announced that an agreement had been reached between the Department of Energy and the New Mexico Environment Department on an enforceable, fence-to-fence environmental cleanup order for the Laboratory. Photo by Linn Tytler, Public Affairs

DOE, state reach agreement on cleanup order

Sen. Pete Domenici and New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson held a joint news conference last Friday to announce that an agreement had been reached between the Department of Energy and the New Mexico Environment Department on an enforceable, fence-to-fence environmental cleanup order for the Laboratory. The agreement will ensure that the environmental problems created during the Lab's sixty years of operations are cleaned up in a timely manner enforceable by the State of New Mexico. The agreement did not include a finding of "Imminent and Substantial Endangerment" and NMED was not given jurisdiction to regulate radionuclides.

The agreement allows the Lab to collect \$43 million, which is the Lab's portion of DOE funding specifically prescribed by Congress for environmental cleanup work at DOE sites. The funding could not be allocated without an agreement between the state and DOE. The agreement comes after months of stalemate that threatened to derail specific cleanup work at the Lab. Domenici and Richardson worked together with NMED and DOE to kick-start negotiations. For more information, see the [joint news release](#). (Adobe Acrobat Reader required)

Laboratory Director G. Peter Nanos on Friday issued a statement in response to the settlement order. "Resolution of the jurisdictional and legal disputes associated with the original order is very welcome news. We look forward to strengthening our relationship with the New Mexico Environment Department, and to continuing the productive discussions I have had with Secretary Curry," said Nanos. "We are eager to resume expedited clean-up of legacy wastes throughout the Laboratory just as soon as the impounded funds are released."

New Mexico Sen. Jeff Bingaman, D-N.M. also issued a statement in response to the settlement. "The cleanup work that needs to be done at [Los Alamos] is important to the health and safety of New Mexicans and I'm pleased that an agreement that will allow it to move forward has been reached. I am especially pleased that DOE agreed to an enforceable time line that contains milestones for investigation and cleanup of environmental restoration sites. This means that [the Laboratory] will complete cleanup by 2015, which is very good news for our state," Bingaman said. "I applaud everyone who was involved with these negotiations and urge that DOE immediately release the millions of dollars in funding it has withheld from New Mexico," he said.



13848