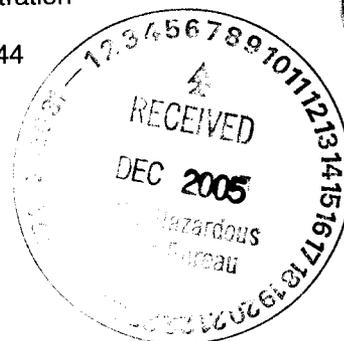




General

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
National Nuclear Security Administration
Los Alamos Site Office
Los Alamos, New Mexico 87544



December 2, 2005

Dear Interested Party:

I would like to inform you that the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) is announcing its intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to evaluate the operation of a Biosafety Level 3 Facility (BSL-3 Facility) at the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) in Los Alamos, New Mexico. This EIS is being prepared and considered in accordance with requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, regulations of the President's Council on Environmental Quality (40 CFR parts 1500 through 1508), and DOE's National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Procedures (10 CFR part 1021).

The United States has identified an emerging threat to homeland security posed by the possible use of biological weapons. As a result, research and development activities involving biological select agents have increased. Several entities are interested in conducting such work at LANL, including the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Additionally, other Federal agencies in the intelligence and security communities, as well as military organizations, have expressed interest in working with LANL in this regard. Other research for these organizations is conducted at LANL.

Based on an earlier identified need, after preparation of an environmental assessment and issuance of a Finding of No Significant Impact, NNSA decided to construct a BSL-3 Facility at LANL in 2001. The building was erected between 2002 and 2004. BSLs are specifically designed and engineered so that researchers can safely work with biological select agents to research diseases, develop diagnostic tests, vaccines, and treatments. NNSA is now proposing to operate this BSL-3 Facility with a broader scope of work than originally proposed in 2001. The operation of this laboratory is the subject of the EIS.

The public scoping period began with the publication of the Notice of Intent (NOI) (<http://www.eh.doe.gov/nepa/noi/71490.pdf>) in the *Federal Register* on November 29, 2005, and will continue until December 29, 2005. The scoping process is an opportunity for the public to assist NNSA in determining, among other things, reasonable alternatives and issues for analysis.

Public scoping meetings will provide the public with an opportunity to present comments, ask questions, and discuss concerns regarding the EIS with NNSA officials. The locations, dates, and times for the public scoping meetings are as follows:



Tuesday, December 13, 2005 - 4:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Fuller Lodge, 2132 Central Avenue
Los Alamos, New Mexico 87544

Wednesday, December 14, 2005 - 4:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Genoveva Chavez Community Center, 3221 Rodeo Road
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505

Thursday, December 15, 2005 - 4:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Senior Stroke Center, 735 Vietnam Veterans Memorial Road
Española, New Mexico 87532

If you would like to request any additional information, please contact me at: Lisa Cummings, EIS Document Manager, U.S. DOE, NNSA, Los Alamos Site Office, 528 35th Street, Los Alamos, New Mexico, 87544; facsimile at (505) 665-4873; or by e-mail at LANL_BSL-3_EIS@doeal.gov. I may also be reached by telephone at 1-866-506-2862.

I look forward to your participation in this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lisa Cummings', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Lisa Cummings
EIS Document Manager