

General

Allen, Pam, NMENV

From: Stone, Marissa, NMENV
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To: NMENV-global
Subject: News stories/press release etc.

Attachments: Picture (Metafile); Picture (Metafile); Picture (Metafile); Picture (Metafile)

LANL: Residents object to nuclear-weapons work

(9 comments; last comment posted Today 01:38 pm)

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By ANDY LENDERMAN | The New Mexican

August 11, 2006

Scores of New Mexicans energetically opposed the possibility of more nuclear weapons work at Los Alamos National Laboratory during a Thursday night meeting.

Many of the roughly 180 people who attended a public hearing at Santa Fe Community College on the draft environmental impact statement for the lab were against the possibility of expanded plutonium pit production, which are triggers for nuclear weapons.

More nuclear weapons work will not make the country safer, retired musician Don Bennett of Rociada, N.M., said. "When we lead the proliferation, other countries will try to follow," Bennett said.

The National Nuclear Security Administration has proposed expanding pit production from 20 to 50 certified pits per year for use in the country's nuclear weapons stockpile. The lab's main mission is to certify the stockpile's safety and reliability. It is also involved in extensive homeland security work.

Also Thursday, representatives from the office U.S. Rep. Tom Udall, D-N.M., insisted on more time for the public to analyze the impact statement and raised concerns over possible risks to workers and the public.

"We would like for the NNSA and (Department of Energy) to brief the Congressional offices in layman's terms, in a way that doesn't require a degree in health physics, on the potential health effects," Udall staffer Michele Jacquez-Ortiz said. Concerns include the possibility of increased cancer risks and radiation doses to workers.

City Councilor Matthew Ortiz was applauded when he read a draft council resolution to the crowd that clearly opposed expanded weapons work, including the possibility of more pit production in the future. "It is the declared policy of the United States government to help constrain the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, but (it) should lead by concrete example," the resolution reads.

Ortiz said the resolution will likely be approved later this month and is supported by Mayor David Coss and seven councilors, including himself.

NNSA officials, who mostly sat mum at Thursday's meeting, declined to discuss the agency's support for increased pit production at the lab. Deputy Administrator Tom D'Agostino told Congress earlier this year that the estimated minimum life of pits is 45 to 60 years, and the stockpile needs to be replenished.

"We must anticipate that, as the stockpile ages, we will need to replace substantial numbers of plutonium pits in stockpiled warheads," D'Agostino said in April.

The draft impact statement also shows that most of the newly generated radioactive and other waste would come from demolition of old buildings and removal of dumps.

A much smaller amount would be generated from work related to pit production.

However, the New Mexico Environment Department and federal officials have not yet determined how to deal with each of the dumps. Also, the construction projects are often dependent on congressional funding before they can move forward.

The document refers to 12 dumps, or material disposal areas. Removing all the contents of those dumps would result in a significant amount of waste, including:

- ◆ 22,000 cubic yards of transuranic waste.
- ◆ 1 million cubic yards of low level radioactive waste.
- ◆ 180,000 cubic yards of mixed low-level radioactive waste.
- ◆ 97 million pounds of chemical waste.

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Comments

By Robert Windsor (Submitted: 08/11/2006 1:38 pm) ([Report this comment](#))

They are just going to replace old unreliable nukes with new safer ones. You'd rather have an unstable arsenal?

By Karla Duarte (Submitted: 08/11/2006 1:22 pm) ([Report this comment](#))

What is strange is that a couple of years ago they were proposing a new pit facility and they were evaluating where to put it. As I recall, other places like Carlsbad wanted it, but the process stopped and now it seems like they decided to do the work here.

By Greg Miller (Submitted: 08/11/2006 12:12 pm) ([Report this comment](#))

What's wrong with a good ol Neutron bomb. Delete the bi pedes whilst saving the buildings for friendlier [] *Muslims*.

Too bad we can't use them on the fifth column. They've infiltrated all segments of society.

I know I'm just throwing out red meat for you all to raise your blood pressures. That'll shorten your lives.

By Dan Almeida (Submitted: 08/11/2006 11:57 am) ([Report this comment](#))

\$\$\$\$ baby. It's all about the greenbacks. Lots of money in that plutonium stuff.

By Charles Streeper (Submitted: 08/11/2006 11:52 am) ([Report this comment](#))

Perhaps Greg is right, let's give all this beautiful plutonium work to the knucklehead Californians, perhaps the terminator can dispose of this great stuff.

By Art Jaquez (Submitted: 08/11/2006 10:14 am) ([Report this comment](#))

Greg,

The jobs and money are not worth all the enduring poison that will come with it and Don is absolutely correct in inferring that we must not allow this dimwit President to force another nuclear arms race on the world.

By Robert Windsor (Submitted: 08/11/2006 10:12 am) ([Report this comment](#))

Last time I looked the City Council of Santa Fe cannot dictate anything that goes on in Los Alamos. What a waste of a resolution. Why not make a resolution that all people of the world be nice so that all wars will end?

By Greg Varela (Submitted: 08/11/2006 9:27 am) ([Report this comment](#))

Hey send us the work over to california we will be glad to take it,since you dont need the money in that part of the country, Retired musicians get a life.

By Chris Mechels (Submitted: 08/11/2006 9:20 am) ([Report this comment](#))

Sadly this is just another "dog and pony" show, required by EPA laws, but having little effect on outcomes. It is, however, a chance to look into LANL's operations and failures a bit more completely because of the data surfaced in the process.

The Draft SWEIS is a rather shoddy piece of work, prepared by SAIC under contract to the DOE. There are rather glaring errors, obvious to anyone who understands even a little bit about LANL operations. It is unclear that the document was proof read.... However, for a thorough evaluation of the many errors, and hopefully their correction in the final document, access to the references which support the SWEIS is necessary. Here the DOE has really failed, as the references are very hard to come by. In Santa Fe, they are available, putatively, at the Northern New Mexico Citizens Advisory Board (NNMCAB). Why there, and not the Sfe Library?

For those who would more effectively address the huge national problem called LANL, the SWEIS process is an opportunity to get more informed about the problem. The DOE has not made it easy however, by making necessary information very hard to come by.

As an "old hand", and retired LANL employee, I find the current SWEIS even more inadequate, and inaccurate, than the 1999 effort. I suppose that this follows from the Bush attitude to informing/involving the citizens (not). Complaints should be directed to our Congressmen.

Cities, States Aren't Waiting For U.S. Action on Climate

By Juliet Eilperin
Washington Post Staff Writer
Friday, August 11, 2006; A01

With Washington lawmakers deadlocked on how best to curb global warming, state and local officials across the country are adopting ambitious policies and forming international alliances aimed at reducing greenhouse gases.

The initiatives, which include demands that utilities generate some of their energy using renewable sources and mandates for a reduction in emissions from motor vehicles, have emboldened clean-air advocates who hope they will form the basis for broader national action. But in the meantime, some businesses say the local and state actions are creating a patchwork of regulations that they must contend with.

This flurry of action is part of a growing movement among state and local leaders who have given up hope that Congress and the administration will tackle major issues, and are launching their own initiatives on immigration, stem cell research and energy policy. Last week alone, former president Bill Clinton launched an effort with 22 of the world's largest cities to cut their emissions, while California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R) and British Prime Minister Tony Blair said they will explore trading carbon dioxide pollution credits across the Atlantic.

Recently, 22 states and the District of Columbia have set standards demanding that utilities generate a specific amount of energy -- in some cases, as high as 33 percent -- from renewable sources by 2020. And 11 states have set goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by as much as 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050.

California also has passed legislation mandating that automakers reduce their vehicles' carbon dioxide emissions 30 percent by 2016, and 10 other states have committed to adopt the same standards if the law survives a court challenge.

In addition, as many as 10 states in the Northeast are working to establish state-by-state ceilings for carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, and allow industries such as power plants to trade pollution credits for

carbon emissions while cutting greenhouse gas emissions 10 percent by 2019. California, Oregon and Washington are negotiating a similar pact.

Some local officials said they are pushing ahead with plans because the Bush administration, which has promoted cleaner technology but opposes mandatory curbs on greenhouse gas emissions, has failed to adequately address the problem.

"Like most mayors, I'm disappointed the federal government has not taken more of a lead on this issue, but so be it. We're moving forward," said Albuquerque Mayor Martin J. Chavez, who is expanding public transportation in his city and has persuaded some other U.S. mayors to pledge to make their cities' buildings carbon-neutral by 2030, meaning their net carbon dioxide emissions would be zero.

But some experts say there is a political imperative at work, as well. Tim Profeta, who worked for Sen. Joseph I. Lieberman (D-Conn.) before leaving last year to direct Duke University's Nicholas Institute for Environmental Policy Solutions, said local politicians feel greater pressure to address the threat of rising sea levels and other climate-related conditions.

"State and local governments are less removed from their constituents, so they're more responsive to voters' concerns," said Profeta, who sits on North Carolina's climate-change commission and has met with British officials on the subject. "Climate change is on people's minds, and they're asking for action."

North Carolina state Sen. Charles W. Albertson (D) said he is not "completely convinced" that human activity is causing global warming, but he pushed for the climate-change commission because he worries that environmental changes are threatening his coastal constituents' homes and livelihoods. "What if it's taking place and we're not doing anything about it?" he asked.

Bush's top environmental adviser, James L. Connaughton, said the president welcomes state and local initiatives because they complement the administration's approach to global warming.

"They're pursuing a portfolio of policies, not a one-size-fits-all policy," Connaughton said in an interview Aug. 4, adding that the United States is also focused on voluntary pacts such as China's pledge to improve its power production efficiency 20 percent by 2010. "At the end of the day, what matters is performance, and we're all making about the same rate of progress."

Some state officials and environmentalists said their efforts will soon surpass anything Bush has done to combat climate change.

Richard Cowart, who has advised officials on both coasts on carbon-trading systems as a director of the Vermont-based Regulatory Assistance Project, said that together, the two proposed trading systems "represent one of the largest efforts to rein in carbon emissions in the world."

And Dan Becker, global warming director for the Sierra Club, said auto manufacturers will cut emissions now that states representing a third of the country's market are preparing to regulate carbon dioxide.

"Obviously, what we're trying to do is reach a tipping point," Becker said. "We're probably close to where the car companies will have to cry 'uncle.'"

The automakers are suing to block California's law, however, and the Bush administration may block it on the grounds that it amounts to usurping the federal government's right to set national fuel economy standards.

Margo Thorning, senior vice president of the American Council for Capital Formation, said this array of state regulations could harm the U.S. economy.

"I don't think it's terribly helpful to have the industry wondering what are the car standards in California vis-a-vis the standards in Arizona," said Thorning, whose think tank is funded in part by Exxon Mobil Corp. "It adds

a lot of uncertainty and slows the kind of investment we'd like to see in the U.S."

These overlapping carbon dioxide regulations may force the administration's hand. Robert E. Busch, PSEG Services Corp. president, said during a Washington panel discussion in February that "you sort of don't blame" environmentalists for pursuing state caps on carbon dioxide, but added, "The answer to this problem is not 50 different approaches to greenhouse gases in the United States. That makes no sense at all."

And Richard J. Osborne, vice president of public and regulatory policy at Duke Energy Corp., told a Duke University audience in September that his utility backed federal legislation on climate change because the "patchwork of state actions" might produce "state-by-state chaos."

Clinton, who is establishing an international consortium so cities from Cairo to Los Angeles can bargain for energy-efficient products and trade policy ideas, said state and local experiments could eventually form the basis for federal action on climate change.

"What we need to do is get more case studies," Clinton said in an interview last week, adding that while voters care more about global warming now than when he was president, as for candidates, "unfortunately, it's not one of those issues where if you don't do something about it, you'll get beat."

Some federal officials are participating in the emerging carbon-trading economy: Sen. Richard G. Lugar (R-Ind.) has registered his farm's hardwood trees on the Chicago Climate Exchange, calculating that the 3,440 tons of carbon dioxide absorbed by the trees will trade for more than \$15,000.

Matt Petersen, president of the advocacy group Global Green USA, said that over the past decade, he has found state and local officials to be more open to imposing energy efficiency standards on commercial buildings and to renewable-energy tax credits. Global Green is advising West Hollywood officials on drafting green building standards for new private construction and is lobbying the Louisiana government to give developers an incentive to rebuild New Orleans in an energy-efficient way.

"We had to do a lot of work and hand-holding early on," Petersen said. "The people who asked the toughest questions are now the biggest advocates."

Friday, August 11, 2006

1. CLIMATE: Groups urge cities, states to avoid Chicago exchange

Michael Burnham, *Greenwire* reporter

The Natural Resources Defense Council, Environmental Defense and more than a dozen other environmental advocacy groups are urging state and local governments to not join the Chicago Climate Exchange, citing pollution "loopholes" within the growing cap-and-trade market.

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The exchange, also known as CCX, was founded three years ago as the world's first legally binding greenhouse gas registry and trading system. Voluntary membership in the market is open to municipalities, businesses,

universities and other entities that commit to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions 4 percent by the end of this year and 6 percent by 2010. Members may curb their emissions internally or buy and trade offsets, which fund renewable energy, carbon-sequestration and reforestation projects.

The exchange has been roundly praised by former Vice President Al Gore and conservatives, alike, as an effective market-based solution to fighting global warming. But last week, NRDC published an open letter criticizing the market's effectiveness and transparency.

The letter, which lists 19 environmental groups on its masthead, charges that market loopholes -- such as allowing companies to exempt emissions from new units -- could allow CCX members to meet their emissions targets on paper without actually delivering new emission reductions.

What's more, the groups assert that CCX rules do not include an "additionality" requirement that would ensure they deliver environmental benefits above and beyond the "business-as-usual" scenario.

"Such provisions allow CCX companies to 'comply' with their emissions caps even if, in reality, they are emitting far more pollution than permitted by the cap," stated a copy of the letter obtained by *Greenwire*.

NRDC senior attorney Dale Bryk, who authored the letter, said it is meant to assist governments that are considering joining the exchange as a result of ongoing CCX recruitment efforts.

"We decided we would put all of our concerns on paper," added Bryk, who said she has fielded at least a dozen recent calls from municipalities evaluating the exchange. "We're not launching some sort of campaign against CCX or their recruitment of companies."

Rather, she continued, the letter is meant to spur cities and states to enter into mandatory cap-and-trade agreements, akin to the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). Seven Northeastern states -- Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York and Vermont -- plan to promulgate the regional cap-and-trade program by Jan. 1, 2009. The pact would regulate carbon dioxide from power plants, with a goal of capping emissions at current levels through 2015 and reducing emissions 10 percent by 2020.

"I don't think there's anything wrong with industry creating a voluntary market," Bryk said. "But if you're a state, you should be developing mandatory policies that regulate companies to cap and trade their emissions."

Concern about sales of offsets

To that end, the groups wrote they are concerned about the prospect of states selling offsets through CCX that the agencies have created with tax dollars, such as energy efficiency investments supported by ratepayer-funded system benefit charges.

Emissions reductions that result from such investments are public goods, the letter continued, which are secured through the implementation of public policies designed at least in part to provide environmental benefits, all of which could be negated if states sell the reductions to CCX companies that consequently increase their emissions.

In an interview, a CCX senior officer declined to address specifics of the letter nor say whether NRDC officials had contacted exchange officials directly to assuage their differences.

"CCX is not a substitute for public policy, nor has it ever presented itself as such," the official said. "The perfect should not be the enemy of the good."

The official underscored that the more than 200 members of the exchange -- including Ford Motor Co., Dupont, IBM and the World Resources Institute -- have committed to legally binding reductions that are independently audited.

"The complexities of climate change often lead to misunderstanding and misleading information, and CCX welcomes all inquiries about how and why it is addressing the disturbing problem of climate change," the official continued.

The CCX membership roster includes one state (New Mexico) and six cities -- Chicago; Boulder and Aspen, Colo.; and Berkeley and Oakland, Calif.

A first step

Cisco DeVries, chief of staff to Berkeley Mayor Tom Bates, said the city of 101,000 joined CCX last year "not because it was the perfect trading system but because it was the only one available that allowed us to put our money where our mouth is."

While the city has yet to decide whether it will renew its CCX membership, Bates and the City Council's seven other members have gone on record in support of a state or West Coast mandatory cap-and-trade market, DeVries noted. What's more, Bates has placed a measure on the fall ballot that would commit the city to curbing its greenhouse gas emissions 80 percent by 2050, using the city's 1990 emissions as a baseline.

Carole Misseldine, sustainability director for Oakland Mayor Jerry Brown, also said her city considers CCX as a first step toward participation in a statewide mandatory emissions-trading market. She said the city's one-year participation in CCX has been "generally satisfactory."

"It is helping us take action and be accountable now," added Misseldine, who said the city has committed to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions 15 percent below 1998 levels. "Its audits have tightened up our accounting."

State of New Mexico



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August 11, 2006
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Environment Department Issues "BOIL WATER ORDER" for Otis Water Cooperative

(Santa Fe, NM) – The New Mexico Environment Department's (NMED) Drinking Water Bureau ordered the

Otis Water Cooperative to issue a boil water advisory for its consumers.

The cooperative serves approximately 5,000 customers in Eddy County, which is about five miles southeast of Carlsbad. NMED ordered the “boil water order” today because it found to bacteriological contamination that exceeded The Maximum Contamination Level (MCL) for E. Coli at the cooperative. NMED requires that the owner and operator of the cooperative notify customers served by the system about the finding. Consumers of water at the cooperative are advised to boil water for five minutes before drinking, cooking and washing dishes.

The presence of E. coli in water indicates the water may have been in contact with sewage and/or animal wastes, and could contain disease-causing organisms. Most strains of E. coli are harmless and live in the intestines of healthy humans and animals. However, a positive test for E. coli in the drinking water supply may indicate the presence of dangerous strains of E. coli or other disease-causing organisms, which are sometimes found in sewage or animal wastes. These types of organisms may cause severe gastrointestinal illness and, in rare cases, even death. Children, the elderly and immuno-compromised individuals are at an increased risk for illness.

Actions have been and will further be initiated to identify the possible source(s) of contamination, complete any mechanical repairs if applicable, establish acceptable disinfection, and flush out the water system. In addition, the Drinking Water Bureau will continue to assist with trouble-shooting to identify the source of the problem along with the assistance of their contractor, New Mexico Rural Water Association.

The New Mexico Department of Health has also been notified and will remain on alert for any health effects linked to this water quality issue. Consumers of the water system may call (505) 827-0006, if they have any water-related health concerns. For more information, call Mike Huber, DWB-DII & IV Manager at (505) 476-8638 or Marissa Stone, Communications Director, at (505) 231-0475.

FREE Community Electronic Collection / Recycling Event

Intel Corporation and Hewlett-Packard have teamed up to host an electronic waste, or “e-waste,” recycling event Saturday, August 19 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Cottonwood Mall – southeast parking lot, near Dilliards.

The recycling event will provide area residents and small businesses the opportunity to properly dispose of their e-waste at no-charge, including monitors, CRTs, fax machines, copiers, typewriters, CPU’s (including accessories), DVD or VCR players, radios, telephones, cameras, stereo equipment. Home appliances (microwaves, stoves, refrigerators etc.) and other electronic devices that contain a liquid or gas will not be accepted.

For additional information call 505-893-3372