



PO Box 15178
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July 11, 1989

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AIR QUALITY BUREAU

Richard Mitzelfelt, Director
Environmental Improvement Division
1190 St. Francis Drive
Santa Fe, NM 87503

Dear Mr. Mitzelfelt:

It is my understanding that the Los Alamos National Laboratories is applying for a final permit to burn radioactive and hazardous chemical waste.

I would like to register my protest against the issuance of this permit until regulations are written controlling the emissions in question, and LANL can be shown to comply. Radioactive materials are not changed by fire, and are in fact most volatile when released into the atmosphere. One millionth of a gram of plutonium absorbed into the lungs creates a 50-50 chance of developing cancer. Dioxins, which will also be released by this plant are also extremely toxic - the standard for these emissions are 30 trillionths of a gram per cubic meter of air. I remember at the last hearing that was held for LANL's proposed municipal waste incinerator, there were not standards in place to govern the emission of dioxins, an omission I found incredible and atrocious.

The fact that LANL is currently operating its incinerator under a "research permit" is a gross violation of the public trust, if not the letter of the law. To issue a full production permit without any standards to regulate radioactive emissions is irresponsible, if not criminal, in my opinion, and will seriously erode any credibility to which your agency may now legitimately lay claim. How can an organization which is called the Environmental Improvement Division conscience the unregulated release of these toxic substances into the air we breathe. Is not it your responsibility to ensure that the public health and safety is being protected.

As a citizen of this beautiful enchanted and enchanting land, I must demand that EID do its job and issue an emergency order (by authority of the New Mexico Air Quality Control Act, section 74-2-10) to prevent the burning of radioactive waste until the State of New Mexico can adopt standards in a public forum to regulate it. The public hearings you have scheduled for July 18 are premature until both hazardous and radioactive regulations can be considered to legally apply.

Sincerely,

Joe Landwehr



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