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Kieling, John, NMENV

From: John Ahlquist [john.ahlquist@sbcglobal.net]
Sent: Monday, October 24, 2011 12:26 AM
To: Kieling, John, NMENV
Subject: Comments on the LANL permit modificatiion request to build the TWF at TA-63

Dear Mr. Kieling:

My comments on the subject request are printed below. Please acknowledge receipt of these comments and tell me when and where I might find them and others on the web.

Thank you very much.

A. John Ahlquist
Walnut Creek, CA

I fully support the Los Alamos National Laboratory [LANL] permit modification request of August 18, 2011to build a Transuranic Waste Facility at Technical Area [TA] 63. It will provide better facilities for handling transuranic [TRU] waste and will provide a much better storage facility for TRU containers than the current domes at TA-54.

I encourage LANL and the New Mexico Environment Department [NMED] to empty the domes as soon as reasonably achievable. It is time to get beyond the legacy of the disastrous NMED decision of the early 1990s which forced LANL to dig up retrievably stored containers and put them in the domes when there was no pathway to disposal [thanks to State and activist opposition]. NMED even had the audacity to fine LANL several million dollars for having the drums in underground retrievable storage. This unfortunate decision subjected thousands of containers to a risk of fire where none had previously existed. NMED's lack of strategic decision-making ability suggested that "disposal" in fabric domes was superior to underground storage or disposal in deep salt beds. Even this decision-making error could have been mitigated had the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant been allowed to open when it was ready in 1990 rather than nine years later in 1999.

NMED has a chance to rectify some of its previous poor decision making by rapidly approving this application for a permit modification to upgrade LANL's ability to manage transuranic waste. I urge that it be done as expeditiously as possible and without additional conditions.

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