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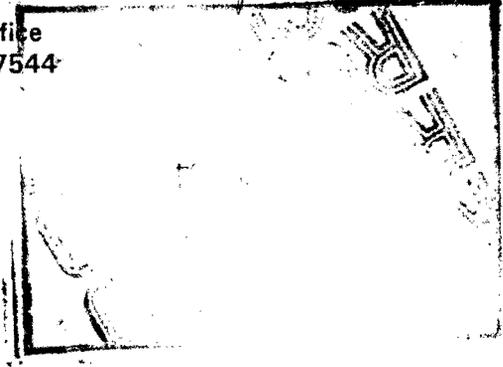
Department of Energy

Los Alamos Area Office
Albuquerque Operations Office
Los Alamos, New Mexico 87544

MAY 20 1994

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John Stroud
Los Alamos Study Group
212 East Marcy Street #5
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Dear Mr. Stroud:

At our stakeholder meeting on May 3, 1994, you asked that we clarify for you and the rest of the group the current status of the Mixed Waste Disposal Facility (MWDF) proposed to be located at Technical Area (67) Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL). You asked for the status of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review, project design, and funding. We agreed that we would send this response to everyone who attended that meeting.

On July 13, 1993, the Department of Energy (DOE) issued a determination to prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) as the proper initial level of NEPA review for the MWDF. Your organization, among others, has asked that we defer that analysis until completion of a site-wide Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for LANL. We will make the determination as to whether to proceed with the MWDF EA, incorporate it into the site-wide EIS, or delay it until after completing the site-wide EIS, after consulting with the state, tribes, and the general public this summer. In the meantime, LANL will continue to work on the EA for the MWDF proposal, but has not yet submitted a preliminary draft EA to this office for our review.

In regard to the design status, you pointed out that the LANL "Fact Sheet for the Proposed Mixed-Waste Disposal Facility," July 1993, under "Schedule," indicated that the conceptual design for MWDF was completed in 1992, the "final design" phase started in April 1993, and "final design" was scheduled to be completed by July 1995; the Fact Sheet indicated "final construction" of the MWDF was scheduled to start in 1996. The Fact Sheet referred to anything after the conceptual design phase as "final design." The Fact Sheet did not refer to the DOE project management design requirements found in DOE Order 4700.1, Project Management System, March 6, 1987, rev. June 2, 1992, which defines conceptual design, preliminary design (Title I), detailed design (Title II), and construction design (Title III).



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As indicated on the Fact Sheet, the Title I design phase started in April 1993. LANL has submitted its preliminary Title I design to DOE for approval, but the Title I design has not yet been approved. Title II design would not start until after Title I was approved, and until the NEPA review requirements have been met. Construction cannot start until after the NEPA review and all other design and permitting requirements are completed.

Project funding estimates depend on the anticipated scope of the project, and are still preliminary pending project definition. We are still determining our treatment needs for environmental restorative waste. At this time, the estimated project cost is \$82.5 million for the entire project of up to 17 waste disposal cells; construction of an on-site treatment facility would add to this cost. Phase I, which would include constructing support facilities and the first two waste disposal cells, is currently estimated at \$29.5 million excluding treatment costs. At this time, the facility, if constructed in its entirety, would have the potential to hold up to 475,000 cubic yards of waste. The modular cell design would allow fewer cells to be constructed or used, depending on actual environmental restoration waste volume. DOE is still considering whether or not the facility would receive operational waste in addition to the environmental restorative waste. Under LANL's current scope of work, operational waste is expected to remain at approximately twenty 55-gallon barrels per year, which is less than 1 percent of the projected annual environmental restorative waste.

I apologize for any confusion generated by the LANL Fact Sheet on this project and hope that this letter clarifies the current status for the proposed MWDF. If I can be of further assistance, please call me at 665-6353.

Sincerely,



M. Diana Webb
NEPA Specialist
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LESH:7DW-098

CC:
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