

NEWS RELEASE

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Environment Secretary Leads Coalition Visit to D.C. To Seek More Cleanup Funding For LANL and WIPP

Regional Coalition of LANL Communities Make Strong Case for Increased Federal Funds

WASHINGTON, DC – New Mexico Environment Secretary F. David Martin and a delegation of New Mexico local leaders from across the state have delivered a strong message to congressional leaders, federal appropriators and Department of Energy administrators in Washington, DC this week.

“Our unified message: New Mexico needs adequate federal funding to ensure proper legacy cleanup of Los Alamos National Laboratory,” said Secretary Martin. “Adequate funding will ensure that the state’s priorities, which include safely removing above-ground transuranic (TRU) waste, and protecting ground water, surface water, and drinking water for the surrounding communities, are met as quickly as possible.”

On Monday and Tuesday, Secretary Martin and the newly formed Regional Coalition of LANL Communities met with Senators Bingaman and Udall; Representatives Luján, Heinrich and Pearce; NNSA Administrator Tom D’Agostino; Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Environmental Management Tracy Mustin; Assistant Secretary for Nuclear Energy Pete Lyons; the Senate and House Armed Services Committee Staff Members; Senate Appropriations Committee Staff Members; and other DOE and Washington officials.

During their discussions, Secretary Martin stressed the need for Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) and the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) to be fully funded in order meet the goals and milestones in the newly developed Framework Agreement. That new agreement calls for the complete removal of above ground TRU waste currently stored at Area G at LANL by June of 2014. In order for that deadline to be met, funding to bulk up operations at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant near Carlsbad needs to be increased. Secretary Martin urged DOE and the Delegation to push for a cleanup budget of \$255 million for LANL and \$229 million for WIPP.

“Governor Susana Martinez made it clear after the Las Conchas fire that the people of New Mexico are unwilling to wait another 10 years for the risks posed by the above ground TRU waste to be eliminated,” said Secretary Martin. “We are going to take immediate steps to eliminate this risk once and for all.”

Secretary Martin also indicated that the State is not interested in amending the existing Consent Order unless there is adequate funding and demonstrated progress to move forward with the Framework Agreement.

“I think we have successfully made our case to the right people here in Washington, D.C.,” said Secretary Martin at the conclusion of Tuesday’s meetings. “However, our coalition will not be satisfied until these efforts translate into adequate federal dollars.”

The discussions in Washington, D.C. this week follow extensive conversations and letters over the past few months from Governor Martinez to Department of Energy Secretary Steven Chu urging for increased funding. Likewise, dozens of bi-partisan members of the New Mexico State Legislature, the State Energy & Natural Resources Committee, and State Radioactive & Hazardous Materials Committee have sent letters to federal appropriators in recent weeks urging adequate funding.



The Coalition members that traveled to Washington, DC included Secretary David Martin, New Mexico Environment Department; Mayor David Coss, City of Santa Fe; Elmer Torres, Pueblo de San Ildefonso; County Administrator Harry Burgess, Los Alamos County; Mayor Alice Lucero, City of Española; Commissioner Danny Mayfield, Santa Fe County; Commissioner Jack Volpato, Eddy County; Board of Commissioners Vice Chair Andrew Chavez, Taos County; Representative Jim Hall, New Mexico State Legislature; and Energy Development Coordinator John Heaton, City of Carlsbad.

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