

5/7/10

Several years ago, the accumulated dust in my home tested too high in Strontium 90. This could only have come from emissions from Los Alamos Lab. I live in Llano, approx. 40 miles directly downwind from the Lab. I live a healthy lifestyle, which involves growing a garden, working and walking outside, and hiking in our mountains. \*1. (on back)

I have just been diagnosed with breast cancer, and join the growing numbers of cancer cases among my friends and neighbors in the Penasco area. Surely the incidents are too high and while we may not be able to prove that they are caused by emissions from the Lab, we all know that this is a large contributing factor. Furrans and dioxins are part of the emissions from open air burning and are endocrine disrupters that interfere with our hormonal systems. Long-term low-level exposure impairs the immune system and accumulates in fatty tissues, particularly breast tissue in women. Like PCB's they are complex chlorines.

I came to Llano because it was beautiful, agricultural and rural. I did not at first know the invisible dangers of our westward neighbor, so close as the crows fly. It is my home and I am not going to move. And while I have been here only 40 years, my neighbors and friends families have lived here for 400 and 4,000 years. We are the unwilling victims of a system that is dangerous and irresponsible. Open air burning should not be allowed to continue. Hazardous work and hazardous waste should not be allowed unless it can be contained on site, which of course it cannot. We all share air and water, our most precious resource. \*2 (on back)

We have suffered contamination for way too long. I have requested comprehensive health studies from all the clinics and doctors to determine how high and widespread are breast cancers, thyroid problems, brain tumors, and other diseases that are the result of work at the Lab, touted as being for our national security. Instead of making us secure, the Lab has made the world a much more dangerous place. Our innocent farmlands are just part of the casualties.

The oil spill in the gulf and other events should show us that our technologies are out of control and on the wrong path. If we have not figured out how to deal with the waste, accidents etc, then we should not be creating it. In the case of oil, at least we are all partly responsible for our greed to use massive energy in our everyday lives, to drive and consume. If all the radioactive emissions at the lab were from work with nuclear medicine, it might be a risk that we should have to bear. It is unconscionable that we are being poisoned because of the development of weapons of mass destruction, something that at this point in history should be banned (and are internationally)

The NMED is supposed to protect our environment, not work with the Labs to dilute safety standards and cover up laxity with technical jargon and bureaucratic red tape. We need to return to common sense and work for the common good of humanity before it is too late. It is time to listen to native elders and bring them to the table in decision making, to chart a course that may allow future generations to survive. \*3 (on back)

Sincerely,



Jean Nichols

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- \*1. my yearly spiritual pilgrimage <sup>to the</sup> is <sup>at</sup> top of Jicarita much as other walk to the Santuario. Studies have showed even higher levels of radiation in the soil at (+ above) 11,000 feet, obviously where the air comes directly over from LANL and then collects + settles into our valleys below. No longer can I hike in the mountains with the same sense of health + peace as I had before I knew the dangers.
- \*2 If LANL + the gov chooses to emit toxins into the air + water, then they need to be responsible and willing (or required) to test the gardens, herbs + fruit that we raise + use to support our health. And they need to give health insurance to all downwinders within a 50 mile radius. (In my treatment I filled in a risk assessment survey + one of the questions that added significant risk was living within 50 miles of a nuclear waste site)
- \*3 LANL (+ the gov) <sup>+ decision makers</sup> are acting like petulant children, playing with toys with no regard to the consequences of its actions. If decision making was conducted with a circle of native elders + women involved (much like families around the dinner table ~ old style) we would ~~have~~ look to long term consequences + responsible action as part of the process. It is time we grow up!

With regards to jobs, there are plenty of jobs needed at LANL doing sane, safe work.