

Kieling, John, NMENV

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Sent: Thursday, May 26, 2011 8:15 PM
To: johnny martinez; lorriel@lanl.gov; ritschel@lanl.gov; Kieling, John, NMENV; sperusek; laeditor@lamonitor.com
Subject: Shock Waves from Explosions
Attachments: shock wave letter.docx

Attached are my comments regarding "open detonations" by the Los Alamos National Laboratory.

Ken Johnson

I read, with surprise, the May 10 Monitor article “Detonation permit meeting has fireworks” in which Laboratory representatives expressed their concern about “noise,” from test explosions, on White Rock residents. I think the most important point has been missed. A distant siren and subsequent explosion may get my attention, but the “shock wave” from these explosions is what I really worry about.

I believe test explosions conducted by the Laboratory should have adequate insight and controls to limit shock waves so that they will not create stress cracks in drywall, footings and stem walls, rattle windows, cause pictures on the walls to fall or tilt, or cause other damage to our homes.

Several years ago, I complained to the Department of Energy that over a period of time, test -explosions created stress cracks in our drywall. The Department accepted responsibility for these stress cracks and paid for the repairs. Since then, my wife and I have repaired some drywall cracks ourselves. We live at the intersection of State Road 4 and Piedra Loop. The detonation site of concern is across State Road 4 from our house.

Recently, the Laboratory has been stationing someone on Piedra Loop, in front of our home, to make measurements associated with the detonations. In emails with a representative of the Laboratory’s legal staff, I have believed that the measurements are of the shock waves from test explosions. Now, I’m not sure that is true, because these measurements should have been discussed at the meeting reported by the Monitor. The slides from that presentation note that direct pressure and seismic measurements are included in the measurements. But, I don’t know what that means. They also state the Laboratory’s concern for human health and safety and the environment. What’s missing is any stated concern for property of residents of White Rock

According to the Monitor article the average “waste shot” is 65 pounds of explosives over the last five years and the maximum allowed by the Laboratory’s interim permit is 2,000 pounds. I have no idea what that means. Sixty five pounds of explosives may not be much, but 2,000 of anything is a lot to me. As I understand it these numbers are the limits for human safety and the environment. That’s good, but I want to know what it means to my property too.

I don’t want to prevent the Laboratory from doing what it needs to do. I only want its management to consider us in its planning over the long term. The shock waves need to be tempered to the point that we have no damage to our homes.

Ken Johnson, 101 Piedra Loop, White Rock