

Kieling, John, NMENV

From: Gregory Buntain [buntain@earthlink.net]
Sent: Thursday, April 15, 2010 11:49 PM
To: Kieling, John, NMENV
Subject: Los Alamos National Laboratory's permit to burn High Explosive waste

Dear Mr. Kieling,

I understand that you are the person assigned to arbitrating the permit for open burning of high explosive waste at LA NL. I would like to comment on this topic and urge NMED to approve the permit.

I am a PhD Organic chemist who worked for many years in the area of high explosives. High explosives are by their very design "oxygen balanced." This means that they contain both fuel and an oxidizer (oxygen source) in nearly balanced proportions. In practical terms, this means they burn very (very) cleanly. Much more cleanly, for instance, than the natural gas we use to heat our homes, or the gasoline we put in our cars. With nearly 11,000 people commuting to LANL daily, the output of hazardous gases to the environment from high explosives is simply insignificant in comparison to the output from the cars used to commute to LANL every day. Stating that the reasons for denying an open-burn permit to LANL for high explosives pertains to "protecting the environment" is either disingenuous, or ignorant.

Further, LANL's work in high explosive science, which requires an avenue for disposing of associated waste, is essential to national security. LANL's work in this area contributes not only towards maintaining a nuclear deterrent, but also towards battling the proliferation of improvised nuclear explosives and supporting the war fighter by understanding the threat from improvised explosive devices encountered every day in Iraq, Afghanistan, and around the globe (including metros and airliners). The work done at LANL in the high explosive science arena keeps us all safer and must be facilitated.

In closing, I strongly urge you to support renewal of LANL's open-burn permit for high explosives and high explosive waste. To do otherwise is not based on any sound technical or environmental concern, but rather on a misinformed anti-LANL agenda.

Feel free to contact me at home if you have follow-up questions. I can be reached at 505 662 6885. Thank you.

Greg Buntain
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