

Kieling, John, NMENV

From: earpg@aol.com
Sent: Thursday, April 01, 2010 8:03 AM
To: Kieling, John, NMENV
Subject: Comments on LANL's Hazardous Waste Permit

Dear Mr. Kieling,

I would like to submit my comments, regarding the LANL Hazardous Waste Permit Hearing, to the Hearing Administrator.

I am a lifelong resident of Los Alamos, and would like to submit my comments as a concerned citizen of Los Alamos. As a citizen of Los Alamos, I not only care about the environment of Los Alamos, I consider environmental stewardship to be one of my responsibilities. I enjoy the hiking and biking trails in Los Alamos County, in the canyons, on the mesas, and in the mountains. I have enjoyed these trails and the associated wildlife for the past 40 years. This is home, and I would hate to see the environment I grew up with disappear.

I appreciate the job the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) has done in requiring LANL to adhere to environmental laws and regulations. This is crucial in assuring that future generations get to appreciate the same beautiful and hazard free environment that I took for granted most of my younger life.

I also appreciate the job of the Los Alamos National Laboratory. It is because of their successes that we, as Americans, get to enjoy our freedom like no other Country on Earth. The Laboratory's success is also crucial in assuring that future generations get to appreciate this same freedom. In the first few decades of its existence, and like so many organizations of that era, the Laboratory unknowingly committed many harmful acts against the environment. They are paying for that dearly now. They have to spend millions of dollars annually remediating sites, implementing environmental laws and regulations (e.g. the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA)).

Today's Laboratory is far more responsible and self aware. They cannot, and do not perform science in the same manner. I live with many of these scientists, I grew up with many of them, I socialize with many of them on a daily basis. Every day, I hear about the many successes of performing environmentally responsible science in Los Alamos. Scientists now look for waste minimization opportunities before starting their operations, they look for recycling opportunities, they look for opportunities to substitute non-hazardous chemicals for hazardous chemicals. It has become a way of life at LANL.

By choosing to live in Los Alamos, it stands to reason that I trust the Laboratory and its staff with my life, and with the lives of my family. LANL is not perfect, but I assure you they make an extremely honest effort to do the right thing. To do the right thing by their stakeholders, the American tax payers. As a tax payer, and as a resident of Los Alamos, it appears to me, that the current draft Hazardous Waste Permit is unjustly restrictive to LANL, and the American tax payer. The NMED intends to deny the open burn unit of LANL's permit application. Here are the pros and cons of this unit:

Cons:

1. There **might** be a slightly elevated risk to earthworms and deer mice, but no threat to their population in Los Alamos County.

Pros:

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- <!--[if !supportLists]-->1. <!--[endif]-->This unit supports programs that provide life-saving tools to our U.S. Troops.
- <!--[if !supportLists]-->2. <!--[endif]-->This unit brings hundreds of thousands of dollars to the economy of New Mexico.
- <!--[if !supportLists]-->3. <!--[endif]-->Absolutely no risk to human health.
- <!--[if !supportLists]-->4. <!--[endif]-->This unit guarantees hundreds of jobs in New Mexico.
- <!--[if !supportLists]-->5. <!--[endif]-->Open burning is safer than transporting the explosive waste on New Mexico public roads.

I do understand that environmental decisions should not be based solely on economic factors or impact to human populations (i.e., that the impact to other populations must be considered), however, it seems apparent that the advantages of operating LANL's open burn unit far exceed the possible risk. By operating this unit, we have the potential to save countless lives, strengthen our economy, and minimize risks associated with the transportation of explosive wastes with absolutely no risk to human health. Please approve LANL's Hazardous Waste Permit including the open burn unit.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to comment.

Greg Erpenbeck
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