

**NORTHERN NEW MEXICO CITIZENS' ADVISORY BOARD
Recommendation to the Department of Energy**

No. 2011-09

“New Urgency for Increased TRU Shipments from MDA G”

Drafted by the NNMCAB Executive Committee

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Background:

The Northern New Mexico Citizens' Advisory Board (NNMCAB or CAB) has repeatedly tried to raise DOE concerns regarding the need to complete removal of the remaining TRU waste stored at Material Disposal Area G (MDA-G) at LANL. (Refer to Recommendations 2011-02 and 2011-07 DRAFT.) In 2000, Los Alamos town site, LANL and in particular, TA-54 were threatened by the Cerro Grande fire, which forced the evacuation of both Los Alamos and White Rock. One of the concerns at that time was that fire at TA-54, where MDA G is located, might release harmful radiation to the community.

Comments and Observations:

Once again, Los Alamos has been threatened by another massive fire, the Las Conchas fire, which has forced the evacuation of the Los Alamos town site, and has threatened LANL property. While White Rock has not been evacuated, the community is just a short distance from TA-54, and the same concerns regarding radiation effects are being expressed by the community. The efforts to fight this fire have been made the number one priority among firefighting activities in the country. The national news has broadcast the issue of fire-related radiation as a widespread concern, and continues to refer to TA-54 directly. This attention, in turn, has forced the LANL team into repeated explanations of protective measures and precautions taken to protect the community. The Governor has even directed the Environmental Department to institute augmented air monitoring to ensure any effects are identified. All this negative attention, and the costs associated with it, not to mention the perception of White Rock and neighboring residents of a real threat to their health, might have been avoided if at least the above ground portion of the TRU waste had been removed from MDA G and transported to WIPP.

Recommendation:

No. 1. DOE/HQ should immediately make completion of removal of the above ground TRU waste from MDA G the top environmental priority and provide the specific priority funding to LANL to allow shipments of this TRU Waste from MDA-G to WIPP at the fastest possible schedule.

Intent:

The intent of this recommendation is to provide confidence to the Northern New Mexico communities that DOE is responding to the need to protect their health and safety.

References:

1. NNMCAB Recommendation 2011-02, “Accelerate TRU Waste Shipments from Area G to WIPP”.
2. NNMCAB Recommendation 2011-07 DRAFT, “Maximum Utilization of WIPP by Increasing MDA G TRU Shipments”