

Trip Report: Northern New Mexico Citizens' Advisory Board Public Meeting

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Submitted by: Jennifer Salisbury

Background:

On behalf of the Environmental Management Advisory Board, Ms. Jennifer Salisbury attended the Northern New Mexico Citizens' Advisory Board (NNMCAB) meeting on Wednesday, July 26, 2006. The NNMCAB is an Environmental Management Site-Specific Advisory Board, responsible for providing information, advice, and recommendations on EM issues specific to Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL).

The goal of Ms. Salisbury's attendance was to:

- Observe the meeting activities.
- Report observations to Assistant Secretary James Rispoli (EM-1).
- Provide feedback and/or recommendations.

Findings and Observations:

J.D. Campbell, the NNMCAB chair, was appreciative of EMAB's interest in their meeting and encouraged future EMAB representation.

The NNMCAB continues to incur challenges in obtaining timely responses to their recommendations. Recommendations represent the primary channel for communication between NNMCAB and the Department of Energy (DOE), specifically EM. Their frustration with this problem has only intensified. Fortunately, EM has recently developed a matrix to track new recommendations and rank outstanding ones according to priority. This matrix also assigns a lead to develop the response and includes a clear timeline indicating the status said response and when it can be expected.

Recently, the NNMCAB conducted a board retreat to develop a work plan. At said retreat, the NNMCAB addressed ways to ease the entrance of new members, including the possible development of a new member orientation package.

The NNMCAB proposed and approved two recommendations: 2006-05 and 2006-07. Recommendation 2006-05 expresses concern over proposed budget cuts to EM programs for fiscal year 2007. The NNMCAB urges the Los Alamos Site Office to put the management and implementation of EM programs on par with their safety and security programs, and apply a graded approach to program implementation. Furthermore, the

NNMCAB recommended EM use commercial practices as the basis for clean-up plans. Board members intend to provide timely input on EM budget priorities. NNMCAB Recommendation 2006-07 encourages LANL to update its website and ensure that “much needed environmental information” is available to the public.

LANL is now managed under a contract with Los Alamos National Security, LLC (LANS). LANS prioritizes safety and developed a specific safety action plan at its last management retreat. LANL staff briefed the NNMCAB on the LANL Environmental Program Baseline Plan, which covers the entire lifecycle for LANL activities, including clean-up and disposition. The baseline includes 765 sites and proposes to disposition all legacy waste by the 2012. This goal improves upon the consent decree between DOE and the New Mexico Environment Department and Federal Facilities Compliance Agreement signed with the Environmental Protection Agency, which requires completion by 2015. DOE has asked the NNMCAB to provide a strategic-level review of key elements addressed in the baseline plan. Those elements include: characterization and remediation strategies; relative resource allocations; relative schedules; and relative risk reductions. The NNMCAB recommendations are needed shortly as the plan is scheduled to be updated in January 2007.