



Expanded Plutonium Pit Production at LANL Will Not Result in Significant Positive Effect On Job Creation and the Regional Economy

Abstract: Precise data on employment in plutonium pit production at the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) and the number of additional jobs if expanded is not publicly available to our knowledge. However, the National Nuclear Security Administration's own documents quoted below explicitly state that expanded pit production would not have any significant positive effect on job creation and the regional economy of northern New Mexico. Further, Nuclear Watch argues that expanded plutonium pit production could actually have negative effect if expanded pit production blocks other economic alternatives such as comprehensive cleanup, which could be the real job producer. Moreover, given LANL's poor safety and environmental record, expanded plutonium pit production could have a seriously negative economic effect on northern New Mexico in the event of any major accidents.

Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Nuclear Facility Portion of the Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Building Replacement Project at Los Alamos National Laboratory, Los Alamos, New Mexico

<https://energy.gov/nepa/eis-0350-s1-supplemental-environmental-impact-statement-nuclear-facility-portion-chemistry-and>

Bolded emphasis added

Note: The CMRR-Nuclear Facility was the up to \$6.5 billion dollar plutonium facility NNSA proposed to build at LANL in direct support of expanded plutonium pit production. The Obama Administration cancelled it in 2012 after costs rose so high. Nevertheless, the 2011 CMRR-Nuclear Facility supplemental environmental impact statement remains the most relevant source of publically available socioeconomic information concerning expanded plutonium pit production that we know of.

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Under the Modified CMRR-NF Alternative, an increase in construction-related jobs and businesses in the region surrounding LANL is also expected. Construction employment would be needed over the course of a 9-year construction period under either the Deep or Shallow Excavation Option. Construction employment under either option is projected to peak at about 790 workers, which is expected to generate about 450 indirect jobs in the region. Operation of the Modified CMRR-NF and RLUOB would involve about 550 workers at LANL, with additional workers using the facility on a part-time basis. **The personnel working in the Modified CMRR-NF and RLUOB, when fully operational, would relocate from other buildings at LANL, including the existing CMR Building, so an increase in the overall number of workers at LANL is not expected.**

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Note: The first phase of the Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Replacement Project, the Radiological Laboratory Utility and Office Building (RLUOB), is already built. It is now being retrofitted to handle up to 400 grams of plutonium-239 equivalent instead of the original 8.4 grams. This will greatly increase its special nuclear materials analytical chemistry and materials characterization capabilities in direct support of expanded plutonium pit production.

Under the Continued Use of CMR Building Alternative, about 210 employees would continue to work in the CMR Building until safety concerns force additional reductions in facility operations. In addition, about 140 employees would be employed at RLUOB. A total of about 350 personnel would have their offices relocated to RLUOB. **The personnel working in the CMR Building and RLUOB, when fully operational, would not result in an increase in the overall number of workers at LANL.**

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4.2.9 Socioeconomics

Construction Impacts—Construction of new buildings at TA-55 to house CMR activities would require a peak construction employment level of 300 workers. This level of employment would generate about 852 indirect jobs in the region around LANL. **The potential total employment increase of 1,152 direct and indirect jobs represents an approximate 1.3 percent increase in the workforce and would occur over the proposed construction period. This small increase would have little or no noticeable impact on the socioeconomic conditions of the region of influence (ROI).**

Operations Impacts—CMRR Facility operations would require a workforce of approximately 550 workers. As evaluated in the *CMRR EIS*, this would be an increase of about 340 workers over currently restricted CMR Building operational requirements. **Nevertheless, the increase in the number of workers in support of expanded CMRR Facility operations would have little or no noticeable impact on socioeconomic conditions in the LANL ROI (region of influence). New LANL employees hired to support the CMRR Facility would compose a small fraction of the LANL workforce and an even smaller fraction of the regional workforce.**

4.3.9 Socioeconomics

Construction Impacts – Deep Excavation Option—Construction of the Modified CMRR-NF under the Deep Excavation Option would require a peak construction employment level of about 790 workers (LANL 2011a:Data Call Tables, 002). This level of employment would generate about 450 indirect jobs in the region around LANL. The potential total peak employment of 1,240 direct and indirect jobs represents an increase in the ROI workforce of approximately 0.8 percent. Direct construction employment would average 420 workers annually over this time, approximately half of the estimated peak employment. The average direct construction employment would result in about 240 indirect jobs in the region around LANL. This total of 660 direct and indirect jobs represents an approximate 0.4 percent increase in the ROI workforce. **These small increases would have little or no noticeable impact on the socioeconomic conditions of the ROI.**

Construction Impacts – Shallow Excavation Option—The impacts under the Shallow Excavation Option from construction of the Modified CMRR-NF would be similar to the Deep Excavation Option. The peak employment number of about 790 construction workers would be the same as under the Deep Excavation Option, and the annual average would be 410 workers over the life of the project. The average direct construction employment would result in about 240 indirect jobs in the region around LANL. This total of 650 direct and indirect jobs represents an approximate 0.4 percent increase in the ROI workforce. Therefore, there would be little or no noticeable impact on the socioeconomic conditions of the ROI.

Operations Impacts—Operations at the Modified CMRR-NF and RLUOB would require a workforce of approximately 550 workers, including workers that would come from other locations at LANL to use the Modified CMRR-NF laboratory capabilities. **The number of workers in support of Modified CMRR-NF operations would cause no change to socioeconomic conditions in the LANL four-county ROI (region of influence). Workers assigned to the Modified CMRR-NF and RLUOB would be drawn from existing LANL facilities, including the CMR Building. The number of LANL employees supporting the Modified CMRR-NF and RLUOB operations would represent only a small fraction of the LANL workforce (approximately 13,500 in 2010) and an even smaller fraction of the regional workforce (approximately 165,000 in 2010).**

Volume 2, p. 2-13: As discussed in this CMRR-NF SEIS, operation of **the new CMRR-NF, if built, is not expected to result in any increase in LANL employment. The people expected to work in the new facility would be transferred from other facilities at LANL where CMR-related activities are currently being accomplished (such as the CMR Building).**

- End of NNSA quotes -

Note: The CMRR-Nuclear Facility was expected to cost up to \$6.5 billion. It's pathetic that the largest construction project ever in New Mexico (with the exception of the interstate highways) was going to create no new Lab jobs.

Comprehensive cleanup at LANL would be a win-win for northern New Mexicans, permanently protecting the environment while providing hundreds of high paying jobs.

- When DOE wants to do something, it lowballs the cost. When DOE doesn't want to do something, it highballs the cost. LANL has estimated that comprehensive cleanup of Area G would cost \$29 billion. Using actual costs of cleaning up smaller dumps, Nuclear Watch has extrapolated that cleanup of Area G would cost \$7 to 8 billion. See https://www.nukewatch.org/facts/nwd/Area_G_Comparison_Costs-11-14-12.pdf
- But of that \$29 billion, DOE estimated that labor costs would be \$13 billion. Applying that 45% proportion to Nuclear Watch's estimate, that would be around \$3.5 billion in jobs, jobs that northern New Mexico sorely needs.
- Comprehensive cleanup could be the real job producer. It has the additional advantage of being more conducive to regional economic development in that more locally based contractors could possibly do the cleanup work, instead nuclear weapons work such as expanded plutonium pit production conducted by huge out-of-state defense contractors such as Bechtel and Lockheed Martin.

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