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Senator Jeff Bingaman

Email: senator_bingaman@bingaman.senate.gov

[Today's date]

Re: Request to cut funding for the Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Replacement (CMRR) Project at the Los Alamos National Laboratory

Dear xxxxx:

Congratulations on your election to Congress!

I am writing you concerning the proposal for a new nuclear weapons facility at the Los Alamos National Laboratory, the Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Replacement (CMRR) Project. This facility is supposedly needed to support pit production at LANL's existing plutonium facility. The current total price tag of this project is estimated to be \$2.6 billion. The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) still doesn't have a complete cost estimate, stating that it is "TBD" (To Be Determined) in its Congressional Budget Requests.

NNSA's FY 2009 budget request for CMRR is \$100.2 million, consisting of:

- 1) \$32 million for construction of Phase A, CMRR offices and light laboratory building, which will cost a total of \$164 million and is scheduled for completion in 2010; and
- 2) \$68.2 million for Final Design of Phase C, the CMRR "Nuclear Facility" (CMRR-NF), whose construction start was contingent upon NNSA's Record of Decision on its "Complex Transformation Supplemental Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement" (CT SPEIS). [Phase B is procurement of specialized equipment, for which no funding is yet requested.]

Congress passed a Continuing Resolution for the first half of FY2009 that will last until March.

I request that no funds be appropriated for CMRR-NF for the second half of FY2009 and for all of FY 2010.

The Record of Decision for the CT SPEIS was released December 19th with a decision to build the CMRR-NF. The SPEIS states, "With a new CMRR-NF providing support, the existing plutonium facility at LANL will have sufficient capability to produce between 1 and 80 pits per year." NNSA claims that the same sized building is needed for one pit as for 80 pits. LANL is currently sanctioned to produce only up to 20 pits per year and was scheduled to produce only six in 2008. In a May 16, 2008 letter to National Nuclear Security Administration Administrator Tom D'Agostino, A.J. Eggenberger, Chairman of the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board stated, "NNSA has not identified a

programmatic need to manufacture war reserve pits beyond the current campaign scheduled for completion in about 2010.”

The vast talents at Los Alamos Laboratory would be much better used for nuclear nonproliferation, global nuclear threat reduction, energy efficiency, environmental research, and cleanup. No pit production is needed at all. The bottom line is that spending large sums of money on weapons of mass destruction that we don't need, at a time when we need to tackle real national security issues and potentially catastrophic climate change, is not just imprudent, it is wasteful at a time when every dollar must be spent wisely.

Sincerely,

(Name and address)