

CITY OF SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO

RESOLUTION NO. 2013-___

INTRODUCED BY:

A RESOLUTION

REQUESTING CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVES TO LOS ALAMOS NATIONAL LABORATORY'S PROPOSED PLAN OF LEAVING NUCLEAR WASTES BURIED IN PLACE AT TA-54, AREA G; URGING INSTEAD FOR FULL CHARACTERIZATION AND EXCAVATION OF THE WASTES, OFFSITE DISPOSAL OF ANY HIGH-LEVEL OR TRANSURANIC RADIOACTIVE WASTES, AND REBURIAL OF REMAINING LOW-LEVEL RADIOACTIVE WASTES IN A MODERN LANDFILL; AND DIRECTING THE CITY CLERK TO INFORM THE NEW MEXICO ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT.

WHEREAS, the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) has announced its preferred alternative to leave approximately one million cubic meters of radioactive and hazardous wastes buried in place at Material Disposal Area G in Technical Area-54, which the New Mexico Environment Department must approve or not; and

WHEREAS, Area G is a 63-acre site, which started accepting radioactive and hazardous wastes in 1957 when record keeping was poor; and

WHEREAS, Area G is located 18 miles from the Santa Fe Plaza, just west of the residential community of White Rock, and 5 miles from the Buckman Well Field near the Rio Grande, which provides drinking water for the City of Santa Fe; and

WHEREAS, LANL was not originally chosen for its geologic qualities as a permanent nuclear waste disposal site; and

WHEREAS, LANL is located in a complex seismic zone above both the Rio Grande and a sole source aquifer providing drinking water for 270,000 people, including the City of Santa Fe; and

WHEREAS, Area G wastes are buried in unlined pits and shafts dug directly into the volcanic tuff, in contrast to the composite liners and leachate collection systems that the New Mexico Environment Department requires of local governments; and

WHEREAS, LANL has claimed that full cleanup of Area G would cost the inflated sum of \$29 billion, but nevertheless recently successfully excavated its smaller Materials Disposal Area B for 136 million dollars; and

WHEREAS, extrapolation from Area B's actual costs demonstrates that full cleanup of Area G could be completed for around 6 billion dollars, or less than the cost of five years' worth of the Lab's nuclear weapons programs that generated the wastes to begin with; and

WHEREAS, full cleanup of Area G would be a win-win for New Mexicans, permanently protecting our precious groundwater and the Rio Grande while creating 100's of high paying jobs for twenty years or more;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE CITY OF SANTA FE that the governing body hereby urges the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) to NOT allow the *de facto* creation of a permanent nuclear waste dump by approving "cap and cover" of the estimated one million cubic meters of radioactive and hazardous wastes at LANL's Area G; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the governing body hereby requests that NMED should instead require full characterization and excavation of the wastes; the possible safe recycling of some materials; offsite disposal of any high-level or transuranic radioactive wastes; and the reburial of remaining low-level radioactive wastes in a modern landfill with liners; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the governing body believes an excavation pilot demonstration project at Area G to demonstrate feasibility of full cleanup would be prudent, based upon the recent successful completion of Material Disposal Area B; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that NMED should provide for a public hearing on all matters pertaining to comprehensive cleanup of Area G; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the governing body directs the City Clerk to send copies of this resolution to our congressional delegation, our governor, the Department of Energy and the New Mexico Environment Department.

PASSED, APPROVED and ADOPTED this ___ day of _____, 2010.

DAVID COSS, MAYOR

ATTEST:

XX, CITY CLERK

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

XX, CITY ATTORNEY