



## ***NNSA Hides Behind Final Enviro Statement To Press On With Unneeded And Exorbitant Plutonium Facility***

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***Santa Fe, NM*** - Without public notice this late Friday afternoon the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) has posted online its Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Replacement Project (CMRR)-Nuclear Facility. While providing materials characterization and analytical chemistry for “special nuclear materials” the Nuclear Facility will be the keystone to an expanded plutonium pit production complex at Los Alamos, quadrupling the Lab’s manufacturing capability from 20 radioactive nuclear weapons cores per year to 80. The Nuclear Facility is also slated to have a vault that can hold up to six metric tons of plutonium that it will share via underground tunnels with the Lab’s plutonium pit production plant.

As expected, NNSA changed little in the Final CMRR-Nuclear Facility SEIS from the draft, whose required public review period expired in July 2011. NNSA refused to revisit its 2004 decision to build the Nuclear Facility, claiming that nothing relevant had changed since then. This is despite much public comment pointing out the U.S.’ adoption of a future nuclear weapons-free world as a long-term national security goal, and repeated congressional rejections of new-design nuclear weapons and directly related expanded plutonium pit production.

Contrary to the National Environmental Policy Act, NNSA offered no real alternatives to building the Nuclear Facility, and continued to push a modification of the 2004 design, mostly to meet increasing (and still unresolved) seismic concerns. The SEIS still leaves undecided whether to use a “Deep Excavation” or “Shallow Excavation” Option for construction of the Nuclear Facility, which was the only substantial choice NNSA offered (and not a true alternative since it still assumes the construction of the Nuclear Facility).

By law, NNSA has to issue a Record of Decision at least 30 days after a Notice of Availability of the Final CMRR-NF SEIS is published in the Federal Register. We expect that Notice early next week. We suspect that NNSA wants to issue Record of Decision before the end of fiscal year 2011 (this September 30) so that it could perhaps have a freer hand in using its FY 2012 \$300 million to begin massive site preparation that could cost ~three-quarters billion dollars. This is in spite of the fact that the design of the CMRR-Nuclear Facility is still only around 50% complete, and that estimated (but still not final) costs for the entire project have exploded almost ten-fold from \$660 million in 2004 when first proposed to Congress

to \$6 billion and climbing today.

Jay Coghlan, Director of Nuclear Watch New Mexico, commented, “The NNSA and Los Alamos Lab seem to pay little heed to wasting taxpayers’ money in these hard economic times. The exorbitant Nuclear Facility is simply not needed because there has been no government decision to raise the level of production from the current 20 pits per year, now being done without the Nuclear Facility. Planned “Life Extension Programs” for existing nuclear weapons will be mostly over by the time the facility begins operations in 2023 (at the earliest), so it is of little if any use to them. Finally, its planned operating life until 2075 doesn’t comport with a future world free of nuclear weapons. It would be far better if taxpayers’ money were invested in getting Americans back to work, since the 6 billion dollar Nuclear Facility will also produce no new permanent jobs. Instead, it will just further entrench Los Alamos into the diminishing nuclear weapons business, when now is exactly the time that the Lab should be diversifying its mission for job growth.”

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NNSA’s Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the CMRR-Nuclear Facility is available by chapters at <http://www.gc.doe.gov/nepa/downloads/eis-0350-s1-final-supplemental-environmental-impact-statement>

As a valuable research tool Nuclear Watch New Mexico has created a single, combined and searchable PDF of the CMRR-NF SEIS at [www.nukewatch.org/importantdocs/resources/CMRR-NF\\_Final\\_SEIS\\_Aug\\_2011.pdf](http://www.nukewatch.org/importantdocs/resources/CMRR-NF_Final_SEIS_Aug_2011.pdf) (25 MB)

Nuclear Watch NM’s 59-page comments and summary on the Draft CMRR-NF SEIS are available at [www.nukewatch.org/importantdocs/resources/CMRR-NF\\_Final\\_SEIS\\_Aug\\_2011.pdf](http://www.nukewatch.org/importantdocs/resources/CMRR-NF_Final_SEIS_Aug_2011.pdf)

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