



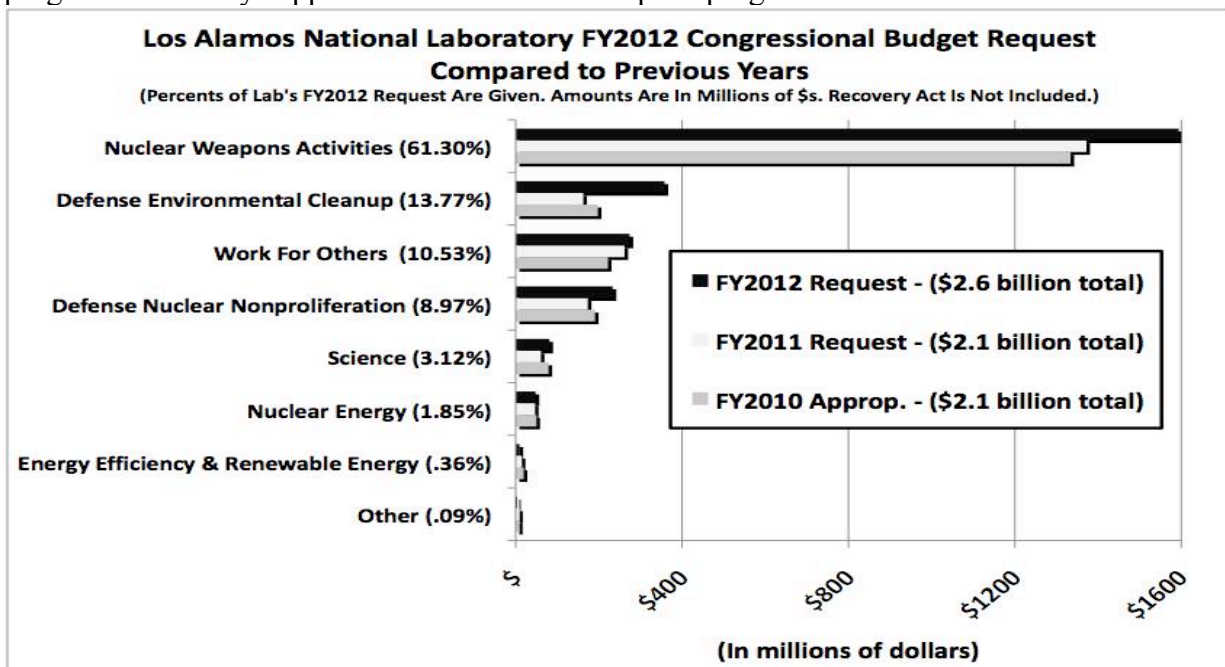
Nuclear Weapons Programs at Los Alamos

Background: The Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) in north central New Mexico was originally founded during World War II as the secret atomic weapons lab for the Manhattan Project. This wartime effort culminated in the “Trinity Test,” the first atomic explosive device, detonated near Alamogordo, New Mexico on July 16, 1945, which was followed by the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan on August 6 and 9, 1945. After the war Los Alamos developed nuclear weapons, the modern “H-bombs.”

Currently, five of the seven warhead types in the planned enduring stockpile are LANL designs. These are the B61 gravity bomb, the sub-launched W76, the W78 for intercontinental ballistic missiles, the W80 for sea-launched cruise missiles and the sub-launched W88.

The Business of Bombs: The University of California (UC) managed Los Alamos since the Lab’s inception in 1942. However, in June 2006 Lab management was taken over by Los Alamos National Security, LLC; a for-profit corporation of partners that includes Bechtel National, UC, Babcock & Wilcox and URS. LANS LLC makes around \$70 million in annual award fees (triple UC’s past fees). Overhead on LANL programs is just under 50% annually.

Despite public and political rhetoric about mission diversification at Los Alamos, funding for its nuclear weapons programs continues to be the overwhelmingly dominant budget item. The DOE has requested \$2.3 billion for LANL in fiscal year 2012, of which \$1.6 billion is for core nuclear weapons research and production programs (70% of the DOE request). There will be an estimated \$300 million in funding from non-DOE sources, bringing the Lab’s total institutional budget to around \$2.6 billion, of which 61.3% is directly for nuclear weapons, while many other programs indirectly support LANL’s nuclear weapons programs.



Note: This chart includes a request of \$367 million for Defense Environmental Cleanup, which we know House and Senate markups have cut to under \$200M.

Current Nuclear Weapons Missions at LANL:

- Research, design, development and simulated testing of nuclear weapons.
- Nuclear weapons Life Extension Programs.
- Limited production of plutonium pits (currently approved for up to 20 per year).
- Manufacture of nuclear weapon detonators for the stockpile.
- Capabilities for R&D and fabrication of enriched and depleted uranium components.
- Assessment and certification of stockpiled nuclear weapons.
- Tritium (radioactive hydrogen used to boost nuclear weapons) and high explosives R&D.
- Explosive hydrodynamic testing of surrogate plutonium pits.

LANL's Plutonium Complex: LANL's Technical Area-55 hosts Plutonium Facility-4 (PF-4), the only fully functioning plutonium facility in the US for pit production. These fissile pits are themselves atomic bombs, now used as the first stage or "primary" to trigger fusion in the "secondaries" of modern thermonuclear weapons. Within TA-55 and contiguous to PF-4 is the newly built first phase of the Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Replacement (CMRR) Project, the "Radiological Lab," and the future and highly controversial CMRR "Nuclear Facility" (please see our related fact sheet at <<http://nukewatch.org/facts/nwd/CMRR-FS-10-13-11.pdf>>).

The CMRR-Nuclear Facility controversy is ultimately about future mission diversification (or not) at LANL. Los Alamos should be diversifying its missions rather than further investing in the shrinking nuclear weapons business. Then perhaps the Lab could help better meet today's national security challenges, such as nuclear weapons proliferation, global climate change and energy dependence. In contrast, building the Nuclear Facility will further mortgage LANL's future to the receding nuclear weapons industry.

Some Brief Socioeconomics: According to 2010 Census Bureau data Los Alamos County's population is 76.3% "white persons, not Hispanic," while New Mexico is the only state with a "minority" majority (59.5% of the state's population). Out of 3,142 counties in the country, Los Alamos County had the 2nd highest median household income. New Mexico has the fourth highest poverty rate in the country and the highest percentage (25.8%) of children living in poverty, while Los Alamos as a county has the lowest poverty rate in the country. Out of 50 states NM ranked 43rd in per capita income in 2010 (\$33,267), down from 37th in 1959, despite the vaunted economic presence of the nuclear weapons industry in New Mexico.

Dark Legacy: Secret Cold War nuclear weapons activities have left a widespread legacy of contamination. Estimates for cleanup of this radioactive and hazardous waste contamination at LANL range from \$2 to \$30 billion or more. This wide spread has to do with the type of cleanup that the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) will ultimately approve, following a public comment process, which ranges from "cap-and-cover" to exhumation. DOE legally committed to cleanup decades worth of contamination across the Lab's 37-square-mile property by 2015 when it signed a Consent Order with the New Mexico Environment Department in March 2005. Precious taxpayer funds should be used to meet those cleanup obligations, not to build unneeded, new nuclear weapons production facilities.

For more Nuclear Watch NM resources please see:

- "The Case Against Los Alamos's CMRR-'Nuclear Facility,'" <http://nukewatch.org/facts/nwd/CMRR-FS-10-13-11.pdf>
- "Background Paper: Plutonium Operations Space Requirements and Availability at LANL" http://www.nukewatch.org/facts/nwd/PF-4_SpaceRequirements.pdf
- "Your Tax Dollars at Work: Privileged Los Alamos Lifestyle Paid for by Weapons of Mass Destruction" <http://www.nukewatch.org/facts/nwd/LANLEcoFS.pdf>
- Plus much, much more on the budget and nuclear weapons programs at www.nukewatch.org

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