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Contact: Jay Coghlan, Nuclear Watch New Mexico, 505.989.7342, jay@nukewatch.org

U.S. Postal Service Cancels Hidden “Arrangement” to Fund Construction of New Los Alamos Science Complex After Watchdog Group Exposes Scheme

Santa Fe, New Mexico – The United States Postal Service (USPS) has terminated a plan to fund construction of a new “Science Complex” at Los Alamos Nuclear Lab. The mission of the 400,000 square foot Complex would have been to “Support [nuclear weapons] Stockpile Stewardship’s related and applied scientific research.” Groundbreaking was to begin early next year, but construction funding for the Complex was “off budget” in the sense that it is not included in the Department of Energy’s \$6.4 billion annual nuclear weapons budget.

Last Wednesday, the watchdog group Nuclear Watch of New Mexico exposed the project after discovering it in documents obtained through a federal Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) lawsuit. Late Friday, the Postal Service issued a news release, announcing “We have decided not to go forward with this arrangement and we have notified the Department of Energy to that effect.” The USPS admitted that the arrangement had involved a *quid pro quo*, with the “the Postal Service assisting the Department of Energy in the development of a Science Complex in exchange for a parcel of land to build a new postal annex...”

Jay Coghlan, Nuclear Watch Director, praised the Postal Service’s decision, noting, “Now it’s time for Los Alamos to play by the rules. Any project the Lab wants this badly should be included in DOE’s annual budget requests that are fully subject to congressional authorization, funding and oversight. The Lab should take this as a ‘lesson learned’ and refrain from any more back-door funding gimmicks.”

Nuclear Watch filed the FOIA lawsuit to obtain copies of Los Alamos’ “Ten Year Comprehensive Site Plans.” Previously, DOE had given the watchdog group a Ten Year Plan with more than 40% of its contents blacked out. In response to Nuclear Watch’s litigation, DOE finally released the Plans without redaction.

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USPS’ June 23 press release, Nuclear Watch’s June 21 press release on the Los Alamos Science Complex and relevant sections of LANL’s Ten Year Comprehensive Site Plans are available at www.nukewatch.org.