



City of Santa Fe **NEWS RELEASE**

www.santafenm.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 7, 2013

Contacts: Alex Puglisi; Public Utilities; 505-955-4232; aapuglisi@santafenm.gov
Jodi McGinnis Porter; Public Information/Multi-Media Administrator; 505-955-6045;
jmporter@santafenm.gov

Santa Fe Mayor David Coss Urges Los Alamos National Laboratory to Analyze and Properly Dispose of its Nuclear Waste in Area G Calls on New Mexico Environment Department to Not Allow the Creation of a Permanent Nuclear Waste Dump

SANTA FE, NM – Mayor David Coss, in his role as Chairman of the Regional Coalition of Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) Communities, presented a draft City of Santa Fe resolution at their monthly meeting today calling for LANL’s consideration of other alternatives to their proposed Technical Area (TA)- 54, Area G remedial action plan, as submitted to the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED). The LANL plan leaves nuclear waste buried in pits and trenches at the Laboratory’s (TA)-54, Area G.

“Full cleanup of Area G would be a win-win for New Mexicans, permanently protecting our precious groundwater and the Rio Grande while creating hundreds of high paying jobs for twenty years or more,” said Mayor David Coss.

Mayor Coss’s draft resolution urges LANL to execute full characterization and excavation of the wastes as well as offsite disposal of any high-level or transuranic radioactive waste and the reburial of remaining low level radioactive wastes in a modern landfill designed to control and prevent the migration of these wastes into groundwater aquifers and the Rio Grande.

LANL has publicly announced several times over the past year that its preferred alternative for the cleanup of Area G is to leave approximately one million cubic meters of radioactive and hazardous wastes buried in place at Material Disposal Area G in Technical Area-54. This alternative has been submitted to the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED), which must approve or not pursuant to the Consent Order issued by NMED to the Laboratory in 2005. Area G is a 63-acre site, which started accepting radioactive and hazardous wastes in 1957 when record keeping was poor. The area is located 18 miles from the Santa Fe Plaza, just west of the residential community of White Rock, and five miles from the Buckman Well Field near the Rio Grande. The well field and river are both sources of drinking water for the City of Santa Fe.

“Permanent disposal of nuclear waste in unlined pits in an area above the Rio Grande and a sole source aquifer that provides drinking water for 270,000 people is **not** in the best interest of the future of all of our New Mexico communities,” said Mayor David Coss.

The resolution notes that Area G or LANL were not originally chosen for their geologic qualities as permanent nuclear waste disposal sites. The Laboratory 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 residents of Santa Fe. Currently, Area G wastes are buried in unlined pits and shafts dug directly into the volcanic tuff. This is in contrast to the composite liners and leachate collection systems that the NMED requires of local governments for municipal solid waste. The resolution urges the NMED to not allow the *de facto* creation of a permanent nuclear waste dump by approving the “cap and cover” remediation alternative for the estimated one million cubic meters of radioactive and hazardous wastes at LANL’s Area G. It further 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.

Mayor Coss will ask the City of Santa Fe Council for approval of this resolution at their December 11th meeting. At today’s Regional Coalition meeting, he asked other member municipalities and counties to also consider taking similar resolutions to their governing bodies for approval. A copy of the draft resolution is attached.

#30#