



CITY OF ESPAÑOLA

Office of the Mayor
(Saturday, March 1, 2008)

A Public Statement from Mayor Joseph M. Maestas

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On behalf of my community, I would like to thank the sponsors of this very important public forum that will explore the future of New Mexico's role in the proposed transformation of the Nation's nuclear weapons complex. Due to an unavoidable schedule conflict, I was unable to be with you here today. However, I am most appreciative of having the opportunity to provide a written statement regarding the subject of today's forum. My statement solely expresses my personal position and does not represent that of my City Council or any current city policy.

As many of you are aware, the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), a separately organized agency within the U.S. Department of Energy, released a draft Supplemental Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (SPEIS) in January 2008 proposing a preferred alternative leading to a transformation of the nuclear weapons complex. Formal public hearings are being held across the country and will continue through March 2008. A Record of Decision is expected in the Fall of 2008.

I was extremely disappointed when I discovered that my community was not selected as a site for one of the public hearings. I immediately and formally notified the NNSA that this was unacceptable and must be addressed by adding an additional public hearing in Española. With the help of many of you as well as Senator Bingaman and Congressman Udall, the NNSA has agreed to schedule a public hearing in Española on March 27, 2008 from 6:00 pm to 10:00 pm at our plaza's Mision y Convento. This is a perfect example of how our collective voices are heard and addressed. I wish to thank the NNSA for their prompt action to arrange this additional public hearing.

The proposed Complex Transformation recommends distributed centers of excellence that would consolidate missions and facilities within the eight major facilities comprising the nuclear weapons complex in a phased approach over the next 10 years. Two of the eight major facilities are The Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) and Sandia National Laboratory here in New Mexico.

I commend the NNSA for developing this proposed transformation in an effort to be more responsive to our national security needs. Reducing our nation's nuclear "footprint" and saving limited Federal

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funds by eliminating redundancies in missions, capabilities, and facilities are very important. Also, addressing the consolidation of storage sites of hazardous nuclear materials is vital in minimizing the impacts on our environment and on the health of workers.

However, the paradigm that has existed and continues with the proposed Complex Transformation is obsolete. A capability-based deterrent to maintain a firm nuclear posture to address perceived threats from nations such as China and Russia is no longer visionary and forward-thinking. The time has come to comprehensively reassess the role of nuclear weapons as a primary means for addressing our national security needs. The protracted, partisan stalemate in Congress is expected to last beyond the Presidential election which may impact the political viability of the proposed Complex Transformation making the likelihood of its implementation uncertain.

We are a country at war. Our economy is suffering as a result and we are experiencing great difficulties in meeting our domestic needs. Our dependence on foreign oil is limiting our global, economic potential and imperiling our environment. The respect for the United States by other countries has diminished. Our efforts as stewards of our environment must no longer be incremental, but must be bold, innovative, and substantial.

We are most certainly experiencing unprecedented challenges in our nation's history at a time that I believe is a true "tipping point." We can continue this Cold War mentality or move forward in applying the best science in the world through our Federal energy facilities for new, peaceful initiatives. These initiatives must help position America again as a world leader, a formidable competitor in a global economy, and a country responsibly meeting its domestic, environmental, and national security needs.

In order for the United States to be a credible, respected superpower; it must "practice what it preaches." If U.S. diplomacy towards other superpowers and developing countries expects them not to build more nuclear weapons, then our own nuclear weapons policy should be consistent with that expectation. Insuring the safety and security of our nation's existing nuclear stockpiles is paramount. Of equal importance is the need to prudently reduce and dismantle these stockpiles at a much faster rate.

Since the greater Española Valley represents a significant portion of the LANL workforce, my main concern is the proposed mission of LANL and how that mission may affect employees as well as our

regional economy. As Mayor of Española, I am extremely sensitive of the impact on existing nuclear programs at LANL as they represent high-wage jobs for my constituents. After recent waves LANL job losses that have disproportionately impacted my community, I can no longer stand by and allow further cuts to occur. I fully support a mission change for LANL. However, such a mission change must be funded and planned properly without job losses.

Our call to action is to decisively and proactively work together to help effect positive change in our national security policy. We, in the greater Española Valley, have decided to launch a bold initiative to establish a Solar Energy Research Park and Academy (SERPA). The SERPA will establish Española and Northern New Mexico at the forefront of renewable energy research, education, and deployment. It will serve to apply current science from LANL, facilitate the rapid commercialization of resulting technologies, and be a potential catalyst for change of the LANL mission. SERPA will be the center of excellence for the New Energy Economy. It will create new, sustainable, recession-proof, green-collar jobs!

We are currently moving forward with another regional cooperative effort to establish the Renewable Energy Development and Deployment Institution (REDDI). REDDI augments the SERPA by developing market-ready products and solutions, primarily energy storage and distribution technologies.

We are in a time of great uncertainty that simultaneously presents us with great, empowering opportunities. Bold, decisive action is needed now! Get involved and weigh in on the future of our nuclear weapons policy and our national security strategy by assertive action towards securing energy independence and continued prosperity.

We all share a responsibility to question old paradigms and create new approaches that will lead humanity, with hope, to a peaceful future. Only by joining our hearts and minds will we make it a reality. Thank you.