



## RESOLUTION 13-74

**A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF TAOS COUNCIL REQUESTING CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVES TO LOS ALAMOS NATIONAL LABORATORY'S PROPOSED PLAN OF LEAVING NUCLEAR WASTES BURIED IN PLACE AT TA-54, AREA G; URGING INSTEAD FOR FULL CHARACTERIZATION AND EXCAVATION OF THE WASTES, OFFSITE DISPOSAL OF ANY HIGH-LEVEL OR TRANSURANIC RADIOACTIVE WASTES, AND REBURIAL OF REMAINING LOW-LEVEL RADIOACTIVE WASTES IN A MODERN LANDFILL; AND DIRECTING THE TOWN CLERK TO INFORM THE NEW MEXICO ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT.**

**WHEREAS**, the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) has announced its preferred alternative to leave approximately one million cubic meters of radioactive and hazardous wastes buried in place at Material Disposal Area G in Technical Area-54, which the New Mexico Environment Department must approve or not; and

**WHEREAS**, Area G is a 63-acre site, which started accepting radioactive and hazardous wastes in 1957 when record keeping was poor; and

**WHEREAS**, Area G is located 18 miles from the Santa Fe Plaza, just west of the residential community of White Rock, and 5 miles from the Buckman Well Field near the Rio Grande, which provides drinking water for the City of Santa Fe; and

**WHEREAS**, LANL was not originally chosen for its geologic qualities as a permanent nuclear waste disposal site; and

**WHEREAS**, LANL is located in a complex seismic zone above both the Rio Grande and a sole source aquifer providing drinking water for 270,000 people; and

**WHEREAS**, Area G wastes are buried in unlined pits and shafts dug directly into the volcanic tuff, in contrast to the composite liners and leachate collection systems that the New Mexico Environment Department requires of local governments; and

**WHEREAS**, LANL has claimed that full cleanup of Area G would cost the inflated sum of \$29 billion, but nevertheless recently successfully excavated its smaller Materials Disposal Area B for \$136 million; and

**WHEREAS**, extrapolation from Area B’s actual costs demonstrates that full cleanup of Area G could be completed for around \$6 billion, or less than the cost of five years’ worth of the Lab’s nuclear weapons programs that generated the wastes to begin with; and

**WHEREAS**, 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;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the Town Council of the Town of Taos that the governing body hereby urges the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) to NOT allow the *de facto* creation of a permanent nuclear waste dump by approving “cap and cover” of the estimated one million cubic meters of radioactive and hazardous wastes at LANL’s Area G; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the governing body hereby 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; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the governing body believes an excavation pilot demonstration project at Area G to demonstrate feasibility of full cleanup would be prudent, based upon recent successful completion of Material Disposal Area B; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that NMED should provide for a public hearing on all matters pertaining to comprehensive cleanup of Area G; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Town Council of the Town of Taos hereby directs the Town Clerk to provide an executed copy of this resolution to our congressional delegation, our governor, the Department of Energy and the New Mexico Environment Department.

**PASSED, APPROVED and ADOPTED**, this 10<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2013, at the Regular Meeting of the Town Council by the following vote:

Mayor Pro Tem Andrew T. Gonzales \_\_\_\_\_  
Councilmember Rudy C. Abeyta \_\_\_\_\_  
Councilmember Fred Peralta \_\_\_\_\_  
Councilmember Michael Silva \_\_\_\_\_

**TOWN OF TAOS**

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**Darren M. Cordova, Mayor**

**ATTEST:**

**APPROVED AS TO FORM**

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**Renee Lucero, Town Clerk**

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**C. Brian James, Town Attorney**