United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 22, 2020

The Honorable Lisa E. Gordon-Hagerty
Under Secretary for Nuclear Security
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20585-1000

Dear Administrator Gordon-Hagerty:

We recently received the attached letter signed by a number of our constituents asking that the National Nuclear Security Administration extend the public comment period for the Draft Supplement Analysis of the 2008 Site Wide Environmental Impact Statement for Los Alamos National Laboratory. Earlier this month, a group of organizations and individuals from New Mexico wrote to you requesting the comment period be extended to at least June 19, 2020. In response to that original request, the NNSA extended the comment period 15 days to May 8, 2020.

In the attached letter, our constituents reiterate the value of public comment for both the national security laboratories and for the public. As an example, they cite the major fire mitigation measures taken after public comment noted the lack of a specific wildfire analysis in the 1999 draft LANL Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement. The current COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent challenges facing individuals, businesses and local and pueblo governments alike require modified timelines to permit adequate public comment. Accordingly, we request that NNSA extend the public comment period on the draft Supplement Analysis to June 19. This would significantly enhance the opportunity for the public to provide meaningful comments and is in the same spirit of the letter we recently sent to the Office of Management and Budget requesting a general extension of comment periods for rulemaking and administrative actions not related to the COVID-19 response.

We continue to believe that providing the public ample opportunity to comment on environmental documents, such as the draft Supplement Analysis for plutonium operations at LANL, provides an invaluable source of expertise to NNSA's decision-makers, enhances transparency and ensures accountability. We respectfully request that you give careful consideration to extending the public comment period.

Sincerely,

/s/ Tom Udall
TOM UDALL
United States Senator

/s/ Martin Heinrich
MARTIN HEINRICH
United States Senator