



December 2023

Dear Citizen:

Pretty much everybody is aware that we are living in the most perilous times since the Cuban Missile Crisis 60 years ago, which then-Defense Secretary Robert McNamara said we survived only by luck. The issue of nuclear weapons is back on the table in a big way. This is a double threat that directly imperils humanity while diverting resources from other critical issues such as greater wildfire and water resource protection and preventing global pandemics and adverse climate change. **So why then are we spending 2 trillion dollars on more nukes and missiles, subs and bombers when we can already overkill civilization many times over?**

The US and USSR (now Russia) have never had just “deterrence” but rather a hybrid that very much includes **nuclear warfighting capabilities. That is why we have thousands of nuclear weapons instead of just the few hundred needed for only “deterrence.”** That is why the U.S. has a “modernization” program to rebuild every nuclear weapon in the planned stockpile with new military capabilities, plus build new-design nuclear weapons and new production facilities expected to be operational until the 2080’s. This is nuclear weapons forever!

**During this fiscal year the Department of Energy will spend \$10 billion in New Mexico (more than double any other state), 75% for core nuclear weapons research and production, with much of the remainder for dumping radioactive wastes. This is astonishing when the state’s entire operating budget is 6% less at \$9.4 billion.** Exactly what the benefits are for New Mexicans from all of this nuclear weapons spending is debatable. For example, **the Land of Enchantment remains dead last in education and quality of life for children.** Further, DOE plans to “clean up” the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), but only on the cheap. It wants to “cap and cover” and leave buried more than 200,000 cubic yards of radioactive and toxic wastes in unlined pits and trenches. This creates a permanent threat of more groundwater contamination, which the Lab used to claim was impossible, but we now know is unfortunately all too real.

Two highlights of this past year: NukeWatch played a key role in negotiating a state permit for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant that will force DOE to compile a complete inventory of radioactive wastes bound for WIPP and to begin looking for an out-of-state radioactive waste dump. We also accompanied the Archbishop of Santa Fe to the United Nations to deliver a well-received statement supporting the 69 countries that have ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The long game is to diplomatically isolate the nuclear weapons powers, pressuring them to finally enter into negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament, as required by the 1970 NonProliferation Treaty. And there is a whole lot more we have done.

In the coming year Nuclear Watch will be fighting against:

- The expanded production of plutonium pit bomb cores at LANL.

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- DOE's planned expansion of the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) in southern New Mexico. Its primary future mission will to dump the plutonium wastes from unneeded expanded nuclear weapons production. How convenient for DOE to have bomb production and radioactive waste dumping all in the same poor state!
- Instead of cleanup on the cheap, we will build upon the recent decision by the New Mexico Environment Department that ordered LANL to fully cleanup one of its smaller radioactive and toxic waste dumps. We will fight to apply that example to the Lab as a whole. In time, we hope to create budget competition between genuine cleanup and unnecessary expanding nuclear weapons programs. There won't be money for both!

As to our effectiveness, here are two testimonials from prominent local leaders:

“One very important aspect of my ministry as Archbishop of Santa Fe is to heighten an awareness of the extreme and unacceptable danger posed by the stockpile of nuclear weapons in our world today. This is a danger that I only recently came to realize, having been lulled into a false sense of complacency since the end of the Cold War. Fortunately, *Nuclear Watch New Mexico* has never been complacent about the danger of nuclear weapons. Far from it. This valuable organization has been sounding the alarm for years and I pray that they will continue to do so for many years to come until we achieve verifiable, multilateral nuclear disarmament. Since the nuclear age began in New Mexico and since it continues to thrive in New Mexico, we citizens of this great state need to sound the alarm as well. I owe a great debt to *Nuclear Watch New Mexico* and I support its work with my prayers and best wishes. I hope many in our community will do with their financial support. Thank you, *Nuclear Watch New Mexico!*”

**Most Reverend John C. Wester, Archbishop of Santa Fe**

“We, the residents of Santa Fe County, City, and the State of New Mexico, are fortunate to have organizations like Nuclear Watch New Mexico. I am grateful to NukeWatch for its leadership, persistence, and efforts to protect the public from the dangers that DOE creates every day at LANL. I am especially grateful that its recent cleanup lawsuit forced DOE to restore a stormwater flow monitoring station that alerts the Buckman Diversion Project to close its gates on the Rio Grande in order to block possible Lab contaminants. This is a concrete, tangible action that helps to protect precious drinking water for Santa Fe City and County residents.”

**Anna Hansen, Santa Fe County District 2 Commissioner**

**Let's keep New Mexico as the Land of Enchantment, not the land of nuclear weapons and radioactive wastes!** Your tax deductible donation toward that goal is greatly appreciated.

For more on nuclear issues in New Mexico and beyond please go to [www.nukewatch.org](http://www.nukewatch.org)

Sincerely,

Jay Coghlan, Executive Director

Scott Kovac, Research Director

*Please consider a tax deductible donation, either by mailed check or online at [www.nukewatch.org](http://www.nukewatch.org) Thank you!*

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