

Northern New Mexico Citizens' Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

White Rock Town Hall**Board Meeting Minutes****December 13, 2000**

<p>Board Members Present: Jim Johnston, Chair Fran Berting Jim Brannon George Chandler Agustin Garcia Dorothy Hoard</p>	<p>Board Members Absent: James Alarid John Alejandro Anthony Armijo - Excused Patrick Feehan - Excused Tim Gallegos Sara Galpin - Excused Menice S. Manzanares – Excused Domingo Martinez Evelyn Maruska – Excused Angelina Valdez - Excused</p>
<p>Ex-Officio Members Present: Michael Baker, ER/LANL James Bearzi, NMED MJ Byrne, DDFO Dennis Martinez, DOE/LAAO</p>	<p>Guest: Gary Allen, E-ET/LANL Joni Arends, CCNS John Arthur, DOE/AAO Julie Canepa, ER/LANL Jean Dewart, ESH-17/LANL Steve Fong, DOE/LAAO Mat Johansen, DOE/LAAO Arjun Makhijani, Institute for Energy and Environmental Research Scot Miller, ESH-17/LANL Judith Moss, NMED James Orban, DOE/WM/AAO Ted Taylor, DOE/LAAO John Till, Risk Assessment Corporation Carmen M. Rodriguez, ER/LANL Paul Schumann, ER/LANL Bob Weeks, NMED</p>
<p>Staff: Ann DuBois, PWT Terra Nash, ATA Services</p>	

I. OPENING

MJ Byrne, Deputy Designated Federal Official, called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The Chair, Menice S. Manzanares, was absent. Jim Johnston, Vice Chair, chaired the meeting.

Dr. Berting moved, seconded by Mr. Brannon that the Board add to its agenda a report on the Bylaws, a proposed recommendation on Acid Canyon, and a report on the SSAB stewardship conference attended by Jim Brannon and MJ Byrne. Mr. Johnston explained that because the Board did not have a quorum, the Board could not pass any recommendations or approve the minutes.

Mr. Johnston introduced Terra Nash, the new Environmental Technical staff person. He requested that Board members, ex-officio members and the public introduce themselves. Mr. Johnston acknowledged Veronica Rodriguez from Senator Domenici's office and Dolores Garcia from Senator Bingaman's office.

Mr. Johnston announced the resignation of Board member Janet Gerwin. She asked to continue with the Monitoring and Surveillance Committee.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mat Johansen reported on the tritium sampling in a Los Alamos drinking water well. The previous results were 36 picocuries. The October test results showed 32 picocuries. That amount is less than the 20,000 picocuries that is the drinking water standard. The well will be tested monthly for tritium. In November, the quarterly update samples will include strontium 90 and other items.

George Chandler asked about the production well schedule. Mr. Johansen replied that the well is pumped every other day.

END OF PUBLIC COMMENT

I. REPORTS

A. LANL Air Quality Audit

Dr. John Till, Risk Assessment Corporation, 417 Till Road, Neeses, SC 29107 803-536-4883 

Dr. Till reported on his Air Quality audit of LANL that was completed on December 13. In July, he shared with the Board his plans for this audit. The purpose of the audit was to determine if LANL were in compliance with the Clean Air Act, 40 CFR 61, Subpart H in 1999. The audit was to see if there were any radiological releases into the atmosphere that exceeded the standards. The audit is the result of a Consent Degree between the Department of Energy and the Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety organization. Dr. Till read a prepared statement of his findings on this second audit that found LANL in compliance in 1999 for offsite contamination. The regulations limit the air releases to 10 mrem per year. LANL reported a dose of 0.032 mrem. The audit team commended LANL for addressing the concerns identified in the first

audit. Dr. Till acknowledged that the audit was conducted under difficult circumstances including the aftermath of the Cerro Grande fire and heightened security considerations at LANL. He said that the thoroughness of this audit is the most comprehensive evaluation under the Clean Air Act. The Institute for Energy and Environmental Research sent Dr. Arjun Makhijani as an observer to monitor the audit for completeness, quality, and thoroughness on behalf of Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety. The audit process was open and included several Pueblos, members of the public and Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety.

The first audit found some deficiencies. LANL improved the compliance process for this audit. Dr. Till said that LANL took this second audit seriously and improved since the last audit. He felt that the audit process itself was successful and contributed to the Department by its being independent and cooperating with citizens.

Dr. Makhijani from the Institute for Energy and Environmental Research observed Dr. Till's team. He did not do the audit but participated in the audit design, the observations, reviewed the reports, and attended the press conference.

Dr. Makhijani stated that he agreed with the findings of compliance. He said that this audit was complete but noted that the first audit was not complete. Dr. Makhijani said that the first report should be conditional because the uncertainty calculations were not done. He discussed the neutron doses that were tracked. Some European research showed that the neutron doses to workers were underestimated. Dr. Makhijani suggested that LANL should look at this issue. He also noted that LANL should institute a complex terrain modeling for the canyons before the next audit.

Mr. Chandler asked about the location of the maximum exposed individual rating. Dr. Till said that the location is the county landfill office and not at LANSCE. The naturally occurring uranium that would be kicked up by moving dirt would cause this dose.

Dr. Till explained that the largest source of neutrons was released by the criticality experiments. The concern was for the exposure to the public on Pajarito Road and to workers. The first air audit raised this issue. Dr. Makhijani suggested that EPA should look at this issue and add some material to the regulations. EPA has been asked about this issue but seems to be not responsive to their comments. Jean Dewart said that the neutrons are included in the all pathways analysis in the Site Environmental Report.

Mr. Brannon asked how the dose of 0.32 mrem compares to dental and medical x-rays. Dr. Till explained that an x-ray is approximately 10 mrem. The dose of 0.32 mrem is slightly higher than background radiation.

Ms. Hoard asked if the audit team used LANL-collected data to base their findings. Dr. Till said that they looked at LANL's data and the calculations that LANL made. He added that staff from the New Mexico Environment Department provided some of the quality assurance on this data.

Dr. Till said that there would be another audit in two years at the request of all parties. An ongoing result of this audit process will be the citizens' involvement in checking LANL for compliance.

Scott Miller acknowledged the Board's role in this audit. The Monitoring and Surveillance Committee suggested locations for the Maximum Exposed Individual calculations. The Committee and the Board made recommendations and LANL implemented the Board's suggestions.

Mr. Chandler thanked Dr. Till and CCNS for their work with the audit. He acknowledged his initial skeptical attitude towards this process. At a result of this audit, his skepticism about Dr. Till and CCNS decreased. He expressed his appreciation for the creditability that the audit gave to these findings and the integrity of their process.

Ms. Byrne asked for the Board, that when Dr. Till's does the third audit, if he would meet with Board and personally involve Board members. She said that the Board wants to work with CCNS. Dr. Till promised that Board members could be involved with the third audit.

B. Interagency Flood Risk Team

Dr. Bearzi said that the Interagency Flood Risk Team would hold on December 18 their first Open House and public meeting. This Team is assessing the damage from the Cerro Grande fire and the possible transport of contaminants. The Team will distribute information to the public in a digestible form. The primary audiences are downstream water users, the general public and the Pueblos. He encouraged Board members to attend this meeting.

C. Chair Report

Mr. Johnston tabled this report due to the absence of the Chair Menice S. Manzanares.

D. DOE Report

Ms. Byrne reported on the Bylaws Committee that included Fran Berting and herself. A member of the public gave extensive ideas about revising the Bylaws. The Committee welcomes contributions to this discussion. The Board will have at least two readings before the Bylaws can be adopted.

Ms. Byrne said that Amanda Burton, Terra Nash and Ann DuBois sent out 160 letters asking for nominations to the Board. The Eight Northern Pueblos Council of Governors nominated Maxine Ewankow and San Ildefonso Pueblo nominated Myron Gonzalez to the Board. She encouraged Board members and the public to nominate more people to fill the vacant six slots.

Ms. Byrne said that the Board received a draft Board newsletter in their packets. She asked the Board members to give their comments to Ms. DuBois. Ms. DuBois will edit the newsletter and then it will go to press by mid-January. The plan is to issue a newsletter on a quarterly basis.

Ms. Byrne invited Board members to attend the February SSAB Chairs meeting in Las Vegas, Nevada.

E. Monitoring and Surveillance Committee

The Monitoring and Surveillance Committee did not meet this month and so did not have a report.

F. Environmental Restoration Committee

Dr. Berting reported on the December 2 Risk Assessment Workshop. The purpose of the workshop was for Board members to learn how LANL evaluates risk to human health. The Committee met on Monday, December 4 at the Northern New Mexico Community College in Española. The Committee and staff members from the New Mexico Environment Department, LANL and DOE looked at the results of the RESRAD modeling of Acid Canyon. The Committee drafted a recommendation on the cleanup levels for Acid Canyon. The recommendation was distributed to the Board members. The recommendation was to select the option of removing 228 cubic meters from Acid Canyon to remove hotspots and protect the public.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 8 at the Northern New Mexico Community College in Española.

G. Bylaws Committee

Dr. Berting distributed a preliminary report and explained that it is not a complete document. She described the major changes from the existing Bylaws so the Board can be more functional and in compliance with the new SSAB Guidance

H. SSAB Stewardship Conference

Mr. Brannon introduced the SSAB Stewardship Principles drafted by the conference. The various Boards were asked to adopt these Principles by the SSAB Chairs meeting in February. If the majority of the Boards pass these Principles, they will be sent as a uniform voice to DOE. These Principles are offered for a first reading at this meeting.

Ms. Hoard asked about the drivers for new technology to clean up. The Principles seem to assume monitoring forever. She offered that it is better to clean up so as not to be monitoring forever. Mr. Brannon said that this issue was thoroughly discussed during the conference. He thought the biggest drivers for clean up were the cost of monitoring and the desire to use the real estate in other ways.

I. Community Outreach Committee

Mr. Johnston said that on December 14, he will do the monthly KRSN radio interview. Mr. Johnston suggested that letters be sent to radio and TV stations to get publicity for the Board.

Mr. Johnston asked that Board members send their comments on the draft newsletter to Ms. Nash or Ms. DuBois. He reported that the Board's webmaster contract for one year is up for renewal. The bill will be sent to Ms. DuBois for payment.

J. Budget Committee

Mr. Johnston tabled the report due to the absence of the Chair Domingo Martinez.

K. Waste Management Committee

Mr. Chandler reported on his conversation with James Orban, Waste Management Director for DOE Albuquerque Operations. They discussed the Board's Recommendation 2000-4 to expedite the waste shipping schedule from LANL to WIPP. Mr. Orban described the new technology that DOE is developing. He offered to brief the Committee. Mr. Chandler said that the recommendation's purpose is for DOE to place a higher emphasis on moving the waste before 2013. During the Cerro Grande fire, there was a possibility of the fire hitting this waste stored at TA-54. The possibility of fire was the second reason for the evacuation of White Rock.

Mr. Chandler relayed Mr. Orban's description of the monthly meeting where the waste management priorities are discussed. The Chair is John Arthur. At this meeting, the decisions are made to use LANL funds as a bank to clean up other Environmental Management sites. Mr. Arthur said that more public interest is needed for this process to change. Other sites use their political influence with their Congressional delegations to increase the funds to clean up their sites. Mr. Chandler asked the representatives from Senators Bingaman and Domenici present at the meeting to take this concern to ask them to give higher priority and shorten the deadlines to move this waste from LANL to WIPP. Ms. Byrne suggested that LANL's Governmental Relations Office could carry this message in a letter from the Board Chair Menice S. Manzanares to the Congressional Delegation.

Mr. Chandler said that the Committee discussed the proposed Arrow-Pak recommendation. The Arrow-Pak™ is used at Rocky Flats. The recommendation asks LANL and DOE to explore this technology. He asked for time on the January agenda to present more information on Arrow-Pak™. Mr. Chandler requested a briefing from BOH Environmental at next Board meeting.

Mr. Chandler expressed the Committee's concern about LANL's Liquid Waste Treatment releasing tritium into Mortandad Canyon. The Committee will look at this issue in more depth.

L. Presentation on WIPP Shipping

G.R. Allen, E-ET Project Leader for Characterization of Waste

Mr. Allen described the near-term TRU shipping schedules. The next shipment is scheduled for December 21. The New Mexico Environment Department may grant the necessary prior approval on December 18. The shipping schedule for next year will stay flat and then in 2002 will go up.

Mr. Allen described the characterization activities required by Part B of the RCRA Permit. Recently an audit was completed that involved EPA, NMED and Carlsbad. New standards will be created as a result of this audit.

Mr. Allen said that cost is a driver with the over wattage containers that have to be repackaged. The NMED RCRA Part B requirements for Mixed Waste are prescriptive. Due to these requirements, LANL will not be able to ship homogenous waste in several years. Right now, LANL can ship drums filled with debris.

Mr. Allen described the contact waste technology that has been developed. The shipping standards for remote-handled waste are not yet finalized. The cost improvements are on target to increase LANL's ability to ship higher wattage drums.

Mr. Johnston asked about the process of selecting two or three more vendors than Westinghouse who wants to pull out of contract. Mr. Allen said that this year's shipments do not require standard waste boxes. LANL is trying to move this shipping completion date in from 2013. The legacy waste is reduced in size and volume by separating the low-level from TRU waste. LANL is adding more stations to pack more waste.

Mr. Garcia asked what corrective action would be taken against the company that failed to correctly ship from INEEL to WIPP. Mr. Allen explained that DOE is responsible for the waste after it leaves a site. He added that Carlsbad would not allow this company to ship until the investigation is completed.

Dr. Bearzi said that the characterization of waste is needed because the RCRA amendments and Congressional testimony show the need for these requirements. These steps are protective of human health. He requested the opportunity to present to the Board some information about the LANL's RCRA Permit, Part B at the January meeting.

I. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m. Mr. Johnston thanked the Board members and the public for attending the meeting.

The minutes are an accurate and complete summary of the matters discussed and conclusions reached at the Northern New Mexico Citizens' Advisory Board meeting held on December 13, 2000.

Certified by:

Jim R. Johnston, Chair Pro Tem Date

[Home](#)

Northern New Mexico Citizens Advisory Board

[1660 Old Pecos Trail, Ste B](#)

Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505

(800) 218-5942 

(505) 989-1662  FAX (505) 989-1752 

[E-Mail CAB](#)

Los Alamos Citizens Advisory Board

P.O. Box 1665

Los Alamos, New Mexico 87544

(505) 662-1234  FAX (505) 662-4321 

staff@lacab.org