

Northern New Mexico Citizens' Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

**NM Energy, Minerals and
Natural Resources Department
Santa Fe, NM**

Board Meeting Minutes

May 24, 2000

I. OPENING

A. Call to Order

MJ Byrne, Deputy Designated Federal Official called the meeting to order at 6:22 p.m. The following Board members were present:

Board Members Present:

Menice S. Manzanares, Chair
James Alarid
John Alejandro
Anthony Armijo
Fran Berting
George Chandler
Patrick Feehan
Sara Galpin
Augustin Garcia
Janet Gerwin
Jim Johnston
Angelina Valdez

Board Members Absent:

Joe Field
Tim Gallegos
James Leach
Domingo Martinez
Evelyn Maruska
Elmer Torres

Ex-Officio Members Present:

Michael P. Baker, LANL/ER
James Bearzi, NMED
MJ Byrne, DOE/DDFO
Joe Vozella, DOE/LAAO

Ex-Officio Members Absent:

Rich Mayer, EPA

Guests:

Julie Canepa, LANL/ER
Paul Schumann, LANL/ER
Delores Garcia, Senator Bingaman's Office

Staff:

Ray Armenta, DOE Consultant
Ann DuBois, PWT

B. Fran Berting moved, seconded by George Chandler, to approve the meeting agenda as amended. The motion was passed by consensus.

C. The Board tabled the approval of minutes from the April 26 meeting.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

Hank Daneman, 1304 Calle Ramon, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

Mr. Daneman was concerned about the causal way that the Rocky Flats Environmental Impact Statement was prepared. The Statement said that there was a negligible risk from fire and earthquakes. Mr. Daneman asserted that the contamination at Rocky Flats is similar to the contamination at Los Alamos. His primary concern is water contamination. The current approach to monitoring the water including the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) and LANL is fragmented and costs \$130,000 per year. The EPA, the NMED and LANL publicly release their data one or two years after it is collected. The data is not publicly available from Pueblos. The Hydrogeological Work Plan calls for 75 monitoring wells costing over \$350,000 each. Mr. Daneman suggested that the Board investigate the need to integrate data from these separate agencies, and track the amounts of the contaminants and where they are going.

Mr. Daneman distributed copies of the recommendations previously passed by the Northern New Mexico Citizens' Advisory Board.

III. REPORTS

- A. Bobby Kitchen, U.S. Forest Service, Coordinator of the Burned Area Emergency Rehabilitation (BAER). The BAER team includes personnel from the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, United States Geological Survey and Los Alamos National Laboratory. Mr. Kitchen reported that the fire had a 108-mile perimeter and burned approximately 42,878 acres. He said that approximately 20,000 acres had to be reseeded having been designated high or moderate burn severity acres. These areas have to be rehabilitated to reduce the danger of future flooding.
- B. James Bearzi, Chief of the Hazardous and Radioactive Materials Bureau of the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) reported on the Bureau's monitoring program to evaluate any possible releases into the atmosphere from the National Laboratory's operations or from the homes that were burned.

Sandra Elly reported the findings of the extensive air monitoring samples. Of the 50 gross radiation samples taken on and off site of Los Alamos, no readings were above the limits expected in a forest fire condition. The Environmental Protection Agency also monitored for six chemicals. All the findings were below standard limits. The findings are being released frequently to the public. The website address for the New Mexico Environment Department is <http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us>. Additional information is available at the Los Alamos National Laboratory website <http://www.lanl.gov>.

The Los Alamos County requested NMED to assess all burned structures for potential hazards. A radiological survey was made of 281 sites. All hazards were identified and

measures taken to reduce any hazardous risk. The New Mexico Environment Department sprayed with foam all burned homes that presented a danger of asbestos to fire fighters or homeowners. NMED is working with the Los Alamos County and insurance companies about the safest way to remove the asbestos from structures built before 1979. The fire did not cause any chemical or radiological releases with the exception of common products like office supplies or household cleaners.

C. Mike Thompson of the Los Alamos Fire Department showed pictures of the fire's destruction of approximately 275 built structures including 400 family units. More than eighty agencies cooperated to fight the fire.

D. Lee McAtee, Assistant Director of LANL's Environment, Safety and Health Division, described the efforts to assess the conditions that existed on Lab land during the fire and the results from the fire. The next big concern is the potential for flooding caused by summer monsoon rains that have been forecast to be abnormally heavy this year. Remedial actions like contour raking are being taken now to allow the soil to absorb the water rather than causing flooding. Congress recently appropriated \$85 million to support rehabilitation efforts at LANL. The Department of Energy requested an additional \$35 million. Public concerns about the potential for run off to contain both radioactive and non-radioactive constituents from previous LANL operations and the impacts to public health and welfare are driving these actions.

ESH is now involved in analyzing the conditions during and after the fire, how hot was the fire and what are results of the ecological damage. The staff is modeling five, twenty and one hundred-year floods. They are examining what to do about how to manage the risk, and how to protect the natural resources.

The Board was particularly concerned about the waste material stored at TA-54. No waste materials were released. The Board expressed support for these materials being shipped quickly to the Waste Isolation Pilot Project in Carlsbad, New Mexico.

Mr. Anthony Armijo distributed a draft recommendation on water quality to be discussed at the June Board meeting.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned 9:10 p.m.

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 May 24, 2000.

Certified by:

Menice Santistevan Manzanares, Chair

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