



**Northern New Mexico Citizens' Advisory Board Meeting**

**Combined Subcommittee Meeting**

**February 21, 2024**

**1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

**WebEx Meeting**

**Final Minutes**

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**Meeting Attendees**

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**Department of Energy**

1. Keith Grindstaff, DDFO, Environmental Management Los Alamos
  2. Kara Hetrick, Environmental Management Los Alamos
  3. John Evans, Environmental Management Los Alamos
  4. Cheryl Rodriguez, Environmental Management Los Alamos
  5. Rudolfo Cid, Environmental Management Los Alamos
  6. Sheryl Pineda, Environmental Management Los Alamos
  7. Susan Wacaster, Environmental Management Los Alamos
  8. Miquela Vargas, Environmental Management Los Alamos
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**NNMCAB Members**

1. Elena Fernandez, Chair
  2. Mark Hayden
  3. Marty Hewlett
  4. Anne Laurent
  5. Manuel L'Esperance
  6. Roger Life
  7. Beverly Martin
  8. Patricio Pacheco, Vice
  9. Miguel Vigil
  10. Joseph Villegas
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**NNMCAB Staff/Support**

1. Bridget Maestas, Executive Director
2. Menice Santistevan, Senior Advisor
3. Yolanda Valdez, Executive Assistant

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**Guests**

1. Elicia Williams, Environmental Management Los Alamos
2. Chelsie Frasure, Environmental Management Los Alamos
3. Erich Evered, N3B
4. Caitlin Martinez, New Mexico Environment Department
5. Stephanie Gallagher, Environmental Management Los Alamos
6. Scott Kovac, Nuclear Watch New Mexico
7. Amanda Caudillo, Environmental Management Los Alamos
8. Kelsey Shank, theEDGE
9. Angela Martinez, Los Alamos National Laboratory
10. Catherine Juarez, Los Alamos National Laboratory
11. David Ableson, N3B
12. Kent Rich, N3B
13. Nadia Martin, Industrial Economics, Incorporated
14. Kristin Henderson, N3B
15. Jennifer Green, Los Alamos National Laboratory
16. Luciana Vigil Holterman, Los Alamos National Laboratory
17. Jamie Meuwissen, Government Accountability Office
18. Mark Everett, Los Alamos National Laboratory
19. Kent Rich, Environmental Management Los Alamos
20. Nadia Martin, Industrial Economics, Incorporated

**\*The written minutes are intended as a synopsis of the meeting.**

**Minutes**

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting of the Northern New Mexico Citizens' Advisory Board (NNMCAB) Consent Order, Public Outreach and Risk Management and Evaluation Subcommittees was held on February 21, 2024, via Webex. Ms. Elena Fernandez, NNMCAB Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. At the call to order, 10 members were signed in, which constituted a quorum.

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**II. Welcome and Introductions**

Ms. Elena Fernandez welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave an introduction. Ms. Fernandez then allowed the members to introduce themselves followed by the public.

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**III. Approval of Agenda**

The board reviewed the agenda for the February 21, 2024, meeting. Ms. Fernandez opened the floor to entertain a motion to approve the agenda as presented.

Ms. Beverly Martin made a motion to approve the agenda; Mr. Marty Hewlett seconded the motion. The motion to approve the agenda passed.

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**IV. Update from Environmental Management Los Alamos**

Mr. Grindstaff went over the agenda items and stated that EM-1, Ike White requested stakeholder and EM SSAB input on the Fiscal Year 2026 budget priorities at each site. The NNMCAB's input will be in the form of a recommendation to EM-LA.

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**V. Presentation on DOE Budget Process Overview & EM-LA Fiscal Year 2026 Priorities**

Mr. Rudolfo Cid introduced himself and his co-worker, Ms. Sheryl Pineda.

Mr. Cid began by discussing the budget process and its timeline. He explained that there are three phases to the budget process, with the first being the formulation phase, the second congressional phase and the last is the execution phase. Mr. Cid then provided information on timeline of each phase. The Execution phase begins in January, the Congressional phase around February, and the formulation phase in April. A description of each phase was then provided. Mr. Cid stated that during the formulation phase a budget request is created in accordance with the budget offered by the President. During the Congressional phase, the members of Congress pass the proposal on to the House and Senate budget committees. Lastly, if the budget is passed, it is then appropriated to the different agencies.

**Fiscal Year Priorities CH-TRU Waste Disposition**

Ms. Rodriguez began by discussing Fiscal Year 2026 for CH-TRU Waste Disposition. Ms. Rodriguez stated that there will be continual characterization, repackaging, and certification of drums. From these processes, mixed/ low-level waste shipments will be created and shipped to offsite facilities. Below-groundwork in Area G will begin with the early stages of waste removal in Pit 9 and a feasibility study of Pit 8. The study will evaluate the waste and determine if it can be exhumed and then shipped to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant or if it can be made into a landfill with a liner, and the drums moved to Pit 9. A new waste processing facility will be coming online. They will be converting from Corrugated Metal Pipe

process to a High Material at Risk Glove Box. The glove box will reside in the same location as the CMP. Dome maintenance will also be continued.

Ms. Rodriguez then discussed Water Monitoring and Remediation. Ms. Rodriguez began by informing the members that the groundwater, storm water, and surface water sampling and monitoring program is a large compliance program and will be continuing into 2026. Interim measures for the Hexavalent Chromium plume will also continue and new monitoring or infrastructure wells plan to be installed. Characterization of the plume and corrective measures planning for the plume will also be ongoing. Lastly, for water monitoring, Ms. Rodriguez stated that maintenance for the current wells will continue to take place.

Ms. Rodriguez then moved onto Soil Investigation and Remediation. She stated that the Sandia Watershed Campaign (with one additional Aggregate Area) will begin in FY26, and the Upper Watershed Campaign (with two additional Aggregate Areas) investigations will continue. Ms. Rodriguez then proceeded to present information on Technical Area 21. She stated they will be undertaking the deactivation and decommissioning of Building-257 and the industrial waste lines in that area. The next topic discussed were the Material Disposal Areas. Corrective Measures Evaluation reports will be done on Material Disposal Area B as well as a Corrective Measures Implementation Plan for MDA H. The Corrugated Metal Evaluation for MDA H was submitted earlier this year. The next phase after the statement of basis and approval from the State will be implementation. An implementation plan will be created, and it will go to the NMED for approval. A continuous Vaper Extraction Interim Measure Report for MDA L will also be prepared. Lastly, Ms. Rodriguez spoke on the Ion Beam Facility Project. She informed stated that they have undertaken the work to deactivate, decommission and remove (DD&R) the Ion Beam Facility and work will continue into FY 2026. Ms. Rodriguez showed a photo of the building and informed the members that the building houses a horizontal and vertical accelerator. She then informed explained that the project is being done in phases. The current work and work for the next year will be on the administrative areas of the building and will then move on to the accelerator portion.

#### **a. Questions**

Ms. Martin asked if all the priorities listed are equally weighted.

Ms. Rodriguez stated that all the items are a priority for FY 2026. Each topic listed is the priority for that program and ground water and Chromium are high priority.

Mr. Life asked if the Ion Beam Facility is at Technical Area 3.

Mr. Grindstaff stated that yes, it is at Technical Area 3, next to the Occupational Medicine Facility.

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## **VI. Public Comment Period**

Ms. Fernandez opened the floor for public comment at 2:00 p.m.

Mr. Scott Kovak, Nuclear Watch New Mexico, stated that he assisted with the new WIPP Hazardous Waste Permit. The permit will include a point that states that the Department of Energy will consider Legacy Transuranic Waste from the Los Alamos National Laboratory as a priority over Newly Generated Transuranic Waste. Mr. Kovak then referred to the feasibility study on Pit 8, mentioned earlier by Ms. Rodriguez. He stated that it is a part of the settlement between Nuke Watch and DOE. Nuke Watch will continue to assist in that study.

1 With no further Public Comment, Ms. Fernandez closed Public Comment at 2:05 p.m.

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3 **VII. Discussion: Drafting a Recommendation on FY 2026 Budget Priorities**

4 Mr. Life stated he needed more information on the Ion Beam Facility and wanted to know  
5 why this is a part of today's discussion.

6 Mr. Grindstaff replied that the Ion Beam facility is a new project to EM-LA. A company  
7 named APTIM has been contracted to complete the DD&R project. APTIM is providing EM-  
8 LA with their contract deliverables and EM-LA is now working on interface with Triad and  
9 the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) to ensure they understand the mission  
10 and how they will be working together in that tight space. The DD&R on the administrative  
11 area will begin this year as well as abatement work. The second phase of removing the  
12 accelerators has not been definitized. APTIM will provide EM-LA with a time frame and work  
13 plan over the next year. The project is estimated to take four to five years to complete. After  
14 the work is completed sampling and characterization of the ground will need to take place.

15 Ms. Martin asked why the DD&R of that facility has become a priority.

16 Mr. Grindstaff stated that the space is needed, and the building has become dilapidated.

17 Ms. Rodriguez added that the Ion Beam Facility is a NNSA facility, and it is under the EM-LA  
18 scope, but is not under the same funding stream. The funds allocated for this project is  
19 specific to the project and does not come out of CH-TRU funding.

20 Ms. Fernandez questioned if each project comes with a prior funding stream and budget.

21 Mr. Grindstaff stated that it does.

22 Ms. Pineda stated that the funding was specifically designated for the Ion Beam Project.

23 Ms. Kara Hetrick asked if we are still expecting funding in 2026 or just for 2024 and 2025?

24 Mr. Grindstaff stated that current funding is allocated through 2025. We will know more  
25 after EM-LA secures operational control over the facility.

26 Mr. Hewlett asked what took place at this facility that has determined it to be under waste  
27 disposal.

28 Mr. Grindstaff stated that it is under the scope of EM-LA, and it is a project that they will be  
29 working on over the years. The building is on the list of NNSA buildings that need to come  
30 down and it is the first to be worked on.

31 Ms. Rodriguez stated that it is one of NNSA excess nuclear facilities and does have the  
32 potential for contamination and it is the first one prioritized by NNSA.

33 Ms. Santistevan asked if the Ion Beam Facility is a priority because of what is in the building,  
34 its dilapidated condition, or because it possesses its own funding stream?

35 Ms. Rodriguez replied that it is a priority because it is an additional scope that was added to  
36 their mission, and that it is the real priority of NNSA due to the need for the land.

37 Mr. L'Esperance asked if due to the Ion Beam Facility project possessing its own funding,  
38 and an outside contractor, was it inadvertently placed on this list, and should it be  
39 disregarded by the NNMCAB as a priority?

40 Ms. Rodriguez stated that he was correct.

Ms. Fernandez asked if it is known what the future use of the land will be.

Mr. Grindstaff stated that he has seen a map that show two facilities built on that area eventually, but he does not know with any certainty.

Mr. Hewlett stated he found a posting about the facility online and it lists the possible contaminants in the building and asked for more information.

Mr. Grindstaff stated that they are currently doing testing to verify the contaminants. As for now, he is only aware that they will be doing asbestos abatement and that it was a tritium reactor so only after testing will they know more about the facility.

Ms. Fernandez recommended that in the future, when the NNMCAB is informed of a new facility, that it be provided with all the needed information on the facility.

Ms. Fernandez proceeded on to the topic of "Drafting a Recommendation for the FY26 Budget Priorities," and the need to appoint an Ad Hoc Committee to work on this. She also noted the importance of the recommendation and that it is due by March 6<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Martin asked why a recommendation was needed if the money cannot be shifted from one project to the other.

Ms. Rodriguez stated that only the funding for the Ion Beam Facility cannot be transferred but the funding for CH-TRU and the Soil and Water Program may be. That is why EM-LA is requesting a prioritization recommendation from the NNMCAB.

**a. Appointment of an Ad Hoc Committee to Prepare Draft Recommendation**

Ms. Maestas asked if there were any volunteers.

Mr. Life, Mr. L'Esperance, Ms. Martin, Mr. Hewlett, Mr. Villegas, and Ms. Fernandez volunteered.

The Ad Hoc meeting is scheduled for February 27, 2024, at 3:00PM.

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**VIII. Adjournment**

Bridget Maestas stated that the date for the WIPP tour had been finalized. The group will travel on October 16, 2024, to Carlsbad, NM. The actual tour will take place on October 17, 2024. The group will return the evening of October 17<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Maestas requested that those members who would like to attend please reach out to the NNMCAB office.

With no additional business to discuss, Mr. Grindstaff adjourned the meeting at 2:32 p.m.

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**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Yolanda Valdez,  
Executive Assistant**

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**Attachments**

1. Final Combines Subcommittee Meeting Agenda for 02/21/2024
2. Presentation, DOE Process Overview & EM-LA Fiscal Year 2026 Priorities

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