
**Department of Energy
Finding of No Significant Impact
Weapons Component Testing Facility Relocation**

Los Alamos National Laboratory

**U. S. Department of Energy
Los Alamos Area Office
528 35th Street
Los Alamos, NM 87544**

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
WEAPONS COMPONENT TESTING FACILITY RELOCATION
LOS ALAMOS NATIONAL LABORATORY

PROPOSED ACTION: The Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Relocation of the Weapons Component Testing Facility (WCTF), Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), Los Alamos, New Mexico (DOE/EA-1035), January, 1995, analyzes the Department of Energy (DOE) proposal to relocate the WCTF from Building 450 to Building 207. Both buildings are within Technical Area (TA) 16 at LANL. The WCTF is a testing shop used by LANL to test physical characteristics of non-explosive materials and structural components to be used in weapons and other devices such as commercial aircraft components, well casings, and bridge structures. The WCTF operations include using beryllium and solid depleted uranium samples, but no other types of radioactive materials. The proposed action also includes installing and operating a new hydraulic load testing machine, and building a small mechanical equipment room on an existing loading dock. Relocating the WCTF to Building 207 and installing the larger hydraulic press would allow WCTF operations to become more efficient and productive by increasing the usable space, consolidating with similar testing operations, and increasing the testing capabilities for larger weapons components. Increased efficiency and productivity would allow the WCTF to better fulfill LANL's programmatic responsibility to maintain weapons development capability and test stored weapons components.

The EA compares the impacts of the proposed action with those of continuing to conduct weapons component testing in Building 450 and continuing to use Building 207 as warehouse space (the "no action" alternative). DOE considered, but dismissed as

unreasonable, the alternative of constructing an addition to Building 450, constructing a new facility, relocating to a different facility at LANL, and relocating to a different DOE facility at a site other than LANL. These alternatives were not analyzed in the EA.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS: The EA indicates that the environmental impacts from relocating the WCTF would be minimal. The WCTF would be moved from one existing building to another; the same types and quantities of chemicals and materials would be used in the new location as in the existing location. This proposal would not impact any ecologically or culturally sensitive areas, including floodplains or wetlands. The proposed relocation would be expected to provide a beneficial potential impact to surface water quality because cooling water for hydraulic pumps moved to Building 207 would be supplied by a closed-loop system, and the need for the current industrial waste water outfall would be eliminated. The proposed relocation would generate some demolition waste from remodeling Building 207 and is expected to produce a small amount (less than 10 cubic feet) of asbestos waste from the removal of the old heating system. The WCTF generates a small amount of hazardous waste, a small amount of low level radioactive waste, and a small amount of sanitary waste; this would not change regardless of whether the facility was relocated or left in its existing location. The WCTF does not generate mixed wastes. Abnormal events or accidents could result in the ejection of test component fragments including toxic or radioactive metals. However, hazardous component testing will be conducted in containment boxes and explosive assemblies will be test fired remotely. Under accident conditions, there would be no difference between potential impacts if the WCTF were relocated and those if it were to remain in the existing location.

Because no environmental permits would be required and because no new area would be disturbed by new construction, no consultation was required with agencies or persons external to LANL. Because no significant impacts were identified, DOE did not identify any special mitigation measures needed to ameliorate adverse impacts.

On September 8, 1994, DOE invited review and comment on the preapproval EA from the State of New Mexico and four American Indian tribes: Cochiti, Jemez, Santa Clara and San Ildefonso Pueblos. In addition, DOE made the preapproval EA available to Los Alamos County and the general public at the same time it was provided to the state and tribes by placing it in the Los Alamos National Laboratory Community Reading Room. Comments were received from the State and from the Santa Clara Pueblo. The State provided comments related to beryllium emissions and the Santa Clara Pueblo provided comments on the relationship of the WCTF to the Los Alamos National Laboratory Site-Wide EIS (August 10, 1994, Federal Register). Comments were addressed in the final EA as appropriate. Specific replies were provided to both the Santa Clara Pueblo and the State of New Mexico.

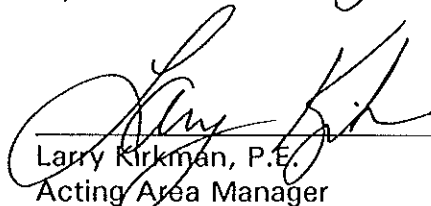
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For further information on this proposal, this Finding Of No Significant Impact (FONSI), or the DOE's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review program concerning proposals at LANL, please contact:

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Copies of the environmental assessment and this FONSI will be made available for public review at the Los Alamos National Laboratory Community Reading Room, 1450 Central Ave., Suite 101, Los Alamos, New Mexico, 87544 at (505) 665-2127 or (800) 543-2342.

FINDING: The United States Department of Energy (DOE) finds that there would be no significant impact from proceeding with its proposal to relocate the Weapons Component Testing Facility at the Los Alamos National Laboratory, Los Alamos, New Mexico, from the existing WCTF location at TA-16 into another existing building at TA-16. DOE makes this Finding of No Significant Impact pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 [42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.], the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations [40 CFR 1500] and the DOE NEPA regulations [10 CFR 1021]. Based on the environmental assessment which analyses the relocation proposal, the proposed action does not constitute a major federal action which would significantly affect the human environment within the meaning of NEPA. Therefore, no environmental impact statement is required for this proposal.

Signed in Los Alamos, New Mexico this 10th day of Feb., 1995.



Larry Kirkman, P.E.
Acting Area Manager
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