

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

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December 10, 2009

Mr. Mark Whitaker
Departmental Representative
to the DNFSB
Department of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Mr. Whitaker:

In accordance with Section 315(c) of the enabling legislation (42 USC 2286d) for the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (Board), enclosed are comments from the Think Outside the Bomb organization. These comments were sent by Liz Woodruff as this group's representative. These comments are in response to Board Recommendation 2009-2.

The Board is accepting these comments as part of the official record of Board Recommendation 2009-2.

Sincerely,

Brian Grosner
General Manager

Enclosure

December 1, 2009

Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board
625 Indiana Avenue, NW
Suite 700
Washington, DC
20004-2001

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SAFETY BOARD

Dear Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board,

Think Outside the Bomb is a national youth anti-nuclear network representing hundreds of young people working for nuclear disarmament. We have held conferences nationwide over the past seven years. Our August 2009 conference took place in New Mexico. Based on what we learned and experienced there, our national campaign in 2010 will join in solidarity with New Mexicans who oppose the new plutonium pit facility at Los Alamos National Laboratory, the CMRR.

We are heartened by your report which honestly and unflinchingly points out the danger posed by the current plutonium facility, TA-55, in the event of an earthquake. Your honest assessment is a wake-up call for the nation that plutonium activities simply cannot be done safely in Los Alamos. It is the wrong location seismically. We urge you to tell Congress about the need to end this unnecessary plutonium work, which the Laboratory shows through its neglect of TA-55 that it cannot handle responsibly.

We are also troubled that the seismic problems at the old CMR are being used as an excuse to build the CMRR nuclear facility. The building of a new plutonium laboratory in an equally unstable area will not reduce this catastrophic risk. Just because the Laboratory erases the fault line under the new CMRR project, does not mean that fault ceases to exist! To compensate for the nearby fault lines, the CMRR is being designed with 10-foot thick concrete floors and there are plans underway to pump grout into a layer of fragile volcanic ash under the proposed facility. Current construction estimates for this facility are \$2 billion. Please tell Congress and LANL that it is not responsible to throw millions of dollars at seismic safety measures that will not work, when the risk is easily prevented by curtailing plutonium activities.

We therefore ask that you re-open your investigation of the seismic safety of the CMRR project. In addition, we ask that you recommend the Laboratory relinquish its plutonium mission if it fails to develop an adequate seismic safety plan for TA-55 per your recommendation. Finally, we urge you to schedule, as soon as possible, a public hearing in Espanola, NM, so that the people of New Mexico living immediately downwind from the Laboratory may have an opportunity to comment on the danger of continued plutonium work at Los Alamos.

Thank you for your important work on behalf of safety for our communities and environment.

Sincerely,

The coordinating council of Think Outside the Bomb
A List of Signatories is on the Following Page

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