

**P R E S S   R E L E A S E**

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**Top-Secret New Los Alamos "Activity"  
Raises Safety Concerns**

**DOE Refuses to Reveal Nature of Hush-Hush,  
Admittedly-Dangerous Project to Public**

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In a secret report dated November 17, 1998, John Conway, Chairman of the Defense Nuclear Facilities Board (DNFSB), warned Assistant Secretary of Energy for Defense Programs Dr. Victor Reis, that the startup of "certain classified activities" at the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) could be unsafe.

In his unclassified cover letter, Mr. Conway raises the concern that because of "inadequate planning, there may not be sufficient time or talent for effective reviews of safety prior to commencement of these startup activities." Conway requests a report from Dr. Reis within 30 days, providing answers to the safety questions posed by his staff.

"It is outrageous that the Department of Energy believes it can initiate a totally-secret new program at Los Alamos without revealing the nature of the program to the public. There is no justification for classifying the very existence of a project that could harm employees, the environment, or the public. I hope that journalists throughout New Mexico can crack the nut of inappropriate secrecy and get to the bottom of this end-run around public accountability," said Greg Mello.

Numerous governmental studies of the secrecy issue have found that secrecy is often an invitation to the worst forms of government abuse, not just in the environmental arena, but in fiscal matters and, as DOE's track record abundantly indicates, in legal and ethical domains as well.

(letter from Conway attached)

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