

# Los Alamos Study Group

*About us · Home · Contact · Contribute · Blog · Twitter · Search*

December 8, 2025

## **Call for potential volunteers to meet in Santa Fe TOMORROW, noon, plus advance link to Wednesday's new ad in the Santa Fe Reporter**

Dear friends --

Some of us are meeting TOMORROW for lunch in Santa Fe, at NOON. If you think you might want to volunteer -- or perhaps just want to meet some of us over lunch -- you must RSVP by midnight tonight. We will send you the coordinates first thing in the morning.

A usual, varied tasks await us, i.e. something for pretty much everybody! Don't worry about showing up for lunch without a volunteer commitment. Just show up. You will be welcome.

You will also have to pay for whatever you eat, LOL, -- lunch, an appetizer, or whatever.

Also, here is an advance link to our coming advertisement in the *Santa Fe Reporter* for Dec 10, 2025: [SantaFeReporter-double-truck-ad\\_10Dec2025-final](#). As you can see, we focused on the [Call for Sanity, Not Nuclear Production](#).

In case you missed it, here is the current ad, on the newstands now: [Will LANL's weapons production mission succeed – and why should it?](#)

More soon,

Greg, for the Study Group

[Permalink](#) for this letter (posting may not be instant); prior [activist letters](#).

To unsubscribe [send a blank email here](#). To subscribe [send a blank email here](#).

[Home page](#); [Press releases](#); [Bulletins](#); [Plutonium Pit Production](#); [Nuclear weapons modernization](#)

Contact [Greg or Trish: What You Can Do](#)

[Ukraine war and peace page](#), updated daily

Please help us build the "[Call for Sanity, Not Nuclear Production](#)"

---

[^ back to top](#)

2901 Summit Place NE Albuquerque, NM 87106, Phone: 505-265-1200

# Los Alamos Study Group

*About us · Home · Contact · Contribute · Blog · Twitter · Search*

November 30, 2025

## **Will LANL's weapons production mission succeed – and why should it? (New Santa Fe Reporter advert)**

Dear friends --

Here is an advance link to our coming advertisement in the *Santa Fe Reporter* for Dec 3, 2025.

[Will LANL's weapons production mission succeed – and why should it?](#)

Thanks is due to Dylan Spaulding of the Union of Concerned Scientists, who virtually attended a Princeton seminar with Jill Hruby I didn't know about, captured her slides, and shared the one cited here.

I will prepare a fully-referenced version of this ad tomorrow, inshallah.

More soon,

Greg, for the Study Group

[Permalink](#) for this letter (posting may not be instant); prior [activist letters](#).

To unsubscribe [send a blank email here](#). To subscribe [send a blank email here](#).

[Home page](#); [Press releases](#); [Bulletins](#); [Plutonium Pit Production](#); [Nuclear weapons modernization](#)

Contact [Greg or Trish](#); [What You Can Do](#)

[Ukraine war and peace page](#), updated daily

Please help us build the "[Call for Sanity, Not Nuclear Production](#)"

---

[^ back to top](#)

2901 Summit Place NE Albuquerque, NM 87106, Phone: 505-265-1200

# Los Alamos Study Group

*About us · Home · Contact · Contribute · Blog · Twitter · Search*

November 29, 2025

**Reminder: The Los Alamos Study Group is showing and discussing "A House of Dynamite" tomorrow, 11/30/25 at the Guild Cinema at 12:30 pm**

Dear friends --

**We will be showing the worthwhile and educational "["A House of Dynamite"](#) ([trailer](#)) tomorrow, 11/30/25, at the Guild Cinema, 3405 Central Ave. NE in Albuquerque ([map](#)), at 12:30 pm.**

**There is no charge for admission.**

We hope those of you who live in or near Albuquerque will be able to attend. Even if (or especially if) you have already seen the film, please come if you can.

**And please invite your friends.** It is amazing how few people do this. People unconsciously assume we can reach many people with a notice like this. We can't.

At first we praised the film for its technical accuracy, fine acting, and for the excellent questions it raised. After showing and discussing the film at three locations in northern New Mexico (Santa Fe, Los Alamos, and Taos), we are used to the realism and fine acting, but the questions raised by the film seem more significant and powerful than ever. The film is perfect for high school and university classroom use, when presented by teachers who are ready to call out the implicit questions deftly incorporated in the screenplay, questions that hang in the air long after viewing.

Our notion of education about nuclear weapons, by the way, is one that involves active citizenship, i.e. *education for effective moral action in the public sphere*. It also involves "education" (in the broad sense) of those who hold decision-making authority. (I almost wrote "power," but along with Hannah Arendt, let's reserve *power* for what appears when people act together in the political sphere. What upholds the nuclear state is something else, or rather a few something elses.)

What we mostly see around us in New Mexico is a kind of colonial education system, right through university studies, which typically prepare students for their humble places within the existing power structure, one where nuclear weapons and all they entail are fully accepted and indeed praised. For many, nuclear weapons become not just unassailable *facts* of life but sought-after *ways* of life -- or more accurately ways of death. "And all the Arts of Life. they changd into the Arts of Death in Albion," sang the prophetic Blake.

We don't see any resistance in New Mexico. We have been full-time peace and disarmament activists since 1992, and the present historical moment is the all-time nadir of peace activism in this state. We see none at UNM, and none anywhere else for that matter. The Democratic Party, which long ago had an antiwar wing, continues to support the meat-grinder in Ukraine and makes only gestures to stop the horrendous genocide in Gaza and the looming war in Venezuela. Our own congressional delegation is pro-war and pro-nuclear-weapons. They smile through the crocodile tears they summon for victim groups, so valuable for distracting audiences from these representatives unwavering support for the nuclear-military complex and its wars. No one is holding them accountable.

That said, there is significant support for nuclear disarmament in society right now, as a very recent YouGov poll illustrates ("[Most Democrats and one-third of Republicans think it's likely the U.S. will get into a nuclear war in the next decade](#)") ([details](#)). There is for example considerable support for partial unilateral disarmament, and essentially no support for the arms race in which we currently find ourselves.

This gives us a lot to work with. If you want to work with us, call or write us at the address below. There is no better or more needful time.

If you can't come, and haven't seen the film, we hope you will take the opportunity to do so (it is still streaming on Netflix), preferably with others interested in discussing what you have seen.

More soonest on the main mailing list; until then

Greg, for the Study Group

[Permalink](#) for this letter (posting may not be instant); prior [activist letters](#).

To unsubscribe [send a blank email here](#). To subscribe [send a blank email here](#).

[Home page](#); [Press releases](#); [Bulletins](#); [Plutonium Pit Production](#); [Nuclear weapons modernization](#)

Contact [Greg or Trish](#); [What You Can Do](#)

[Ukraine war and peace page](#), updated daily

Please help us build the "[Call for Sanity. Not Nuclear Production](#)

# Los Alamos Study Group

*About us · Home · Contact · Contribute · Blog · Twitter · Search*

October 16, 2025

**Quick update: "A House of Dynamite" now showing through 10/23 in Santa Fe; Study Group screenings and discussions now in Santa Fe, Los Alamos, Taos, and Albuquerque**

Dear friends --

The worthwhile and educational "[A House of Dynamite](#)" ([trailer](#)) is now showing through Thursday 10/23 at various times once a day at [Sky Cinemas](#) in Santa Fe, at the Railyard:

- Thu 10/16: 3:15 pm
- Fri 10/17: 12:00 pm
- Sat 10/18: 2:45 pm
- Sun 10/19: 12:00 pm
- Mon 10/20: 5:00 pm
- Tue 10/21: 3:20 pm
- Wed 10/22: 12:00 pm
- Thu 10/23: 1:50 pm

On Friday 10/24, Netflix will begin streaming the film.

We now have planned four of our own screenings, followed by discussions:

- **On Sunday October 26 at 6 pm, in cooperation with the Santa Fe Friends Meeting (Quakers) at the Friends meeting house, 505 Camino de Los Marquez, Santa Fe ([map](#)).**
- **On Wednesday October 29, also at 6 pm, at the Los Alamos SALA "Social Center" ([map](#)).**
- **On Thursday October 30, at 1 pm, at the Taos Public Library, 402 Camino De La Placita ([map](#)).**
- **On Sunday November 30 at the Guild Cinema ([map](#)) in Albuquerque, at 12:30 pm.**

We hope you will be able to attend one of these discussions.

If you have already seen the film, or do see it before our own screenings and discussions, please feel free to send your comments! We are interested in what you think about the film and the issues it raises.

There is an enormous amount going on just now, as you know. It's especially important for us all to stay as centered as we can be.

More soonest,

Greg, for the Study Group

---

[^ back to top](#)

2901 Summit Place NE Albuquerque, NM 87106, Phone: 505-265-1200

# Los Alamos Study Group

*About us · Home · Contact · Contribute · Blog · Twitter · Search*

October 13, 2025

**"House of Dynamite" is showing NOW in Santa Fe at Sky Cinemas; Study Group screenings and discussions in Santa Fe, Los Alamos, and Albuquerque / \$13 B spent at LANL for... 1 pit? / U.S. now at war with Russia**

Dear friends --

I am quite remiss in not spreading the word before now that "[A House of Dynamite](#)" ([trailer](#)) is unexpectedly showing **NOW** at [Sky Cinemas](#) in Santa Fe. We do not know how long it will continue there, but here are the known remaining showtimes:

- 10/13 Mon 6:15 pm
- 10/14 Tues 11:15 am, 3:15 pm, 6:15 pm
- 10/15 Wed 11:15 am, 3:15 pm, 7:15 pm
- 10/16 Thu 11:10 am, 3:15 pm

We saw the movie and think it's terrific, exceeding our expectations. It is anything but a cliché. It was superbly cast and acted, and the scenes were to our eye indistinguishable from the reality they depicted. There was no sensationalism, just drama.

There is certainly value in seeing the film as an immersive theater experience. The 11:15 showing cost us \$10 apiece.

The political value of seeing the movie at a Study Group event followed by discussion will however be many times that of seeing it privately or in a theater *without* discussion.

Of course you might be able to do both! If you see the film, why not make some notes and then come to a Study Group screening and discussion later, with your thoughts to add to the mix.

Netflix will stream this film starting October 24.

## **Our screenings and discussions:**

- **On Sunday October 26 at 6 pm, in cooperation with the Santa Fe Friends Meeting (Quakers) at the Friends meeting house, 505 Camino de Los Marquez, Santa Fe ([map](#)).**
- **On Wednesday October 29, also from 6-9 pm, at the Los Alamos SALA "Social Center" ([map](#)).**
- **On Sunday November 30 at the Guild Cinema ([map](#)) in Albuquerque, from 12:30 to 3:30 pm.**

\*\*\*\*

We still have had no word about whether LANL made any pits this past fiscal year. We are 13 days into the new year -- and it is 22 years since 2003, since which date NNSA has spent \$13 billion trying to make pits at LANL.

\*\*\*\*

On Ukraine and Russian relations in general, we commend to you the brief recent selections and comments on our [Ukraine War page](#). Things are happening.

As Alastair Crooke remarked this morning, **there is no evading the fact the U.S. is now at war with Russia.**

Needless to say, this affects crisis stability -- an unspoken theme in "A House of Dynamite."

The situation is not static. Serious threats are being made by the U.S. (e.g. for U.S. crews to launch and guide long-range Tomahawk cruise missiles into Russia). Events could quickly turn existential without any person in the West actually planning for that to happen. U.S. leaders simply do not understand Russia. It's a job requirement.

Meanwhile the war itself is becoming more dynamic, at the front and in the Ukrainian and Russian rears.

How the West will process its deepening Ukrainian defeat is up in the air. It is, as Emmanuel Todd [says](#), a much more consequential defeat than the prior ones in Vietnam and Afghanistan, coming as it does in a time of economic decline and social and political crisis.

\*\*\*\*

Regarding the new arms race (that the U.S. has already "lost"), you might have seen this good essay by Scott Ritter, "[Trump's 'Super Duper' Delusion](#)" (Oct 11, 2025; minor error: there are 400 ICBMs deployed, not 450; 50 silos are empty).

In an arms race New Mexico is, and will remain, the biggest loser. As they say, stop digging.

It would be easy to underestimate our own power in this.

Greg, for the Study Group

# Los Alamos Study Group

*About us · Home · Contact · Contribute · Blog · Twitter · Search*

October 6, 2025

**Mark your calendars! "House of Dynamite" screenings and discussions in Santa Fe, Los Alamos, and Albuquerque; more**

Dear friends --

"[A House of Dynamite](#)" is a new film about the very real danger of nuclear war, from Academy Award winning director Katherine Bigelow ([trailer](#)). The film's tagline: "Not if. When." It will be shown in a (very) few theaters starting this Friday (October 10), none of which are in New Mexico.

Netflix will stream this film starting October 24. Many reviews of the film are available; [here](#) is a relatively detailed one.

**On Sunday October 26 at 6 pm, in cooperation with the Santa Fe Friends Meeting (Quakers), we will screen this film, followed by a discussion of the issues it presents, at the Friends meeting house, 505 Camino de Los Marquez, Santa Fe ([map](#)).**

**We will also host a screening and discussion of the film at the Los Alamos SALA "Social Center" ([map](#)) on Wednesday October 29, also from 6-9 pm.**

**We will also screen this film at the Guild Cinema ([map](#)) in Albuquerque on November 30 (the earliest date available), again followed by discussion, from 12:30 to 3:30 pm.**

We want to use this film as best we can to educate the public about the deadly and quite absurd reality of nuclear war plans. Please help

The tie-in to plutonium warhead cores ("pits") at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) is clear. The pits LANL would make are \*SOLELY\* to provide a \*MULTI-WARHEAD OPTION\* for \*A NEW KIND OF MISSILE\* ("Sentinel") to be placed in \*NEW\* underground silos, the precise locations of which will be immediately known. Should the current or future U.S. missile fields be attacked, the President has only a few minutes to decide whether or not to launch some or all of these missiles before they are destroyed.

\*\*\*

Speaking of pits, where are the 20 War Reserve pits LANL was required by law to make in the fiscal year that ended last Tuesday, September 30?

Up to this morning, the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) has so far maintained strict radio silence on this topic ("[Energy Department silent on warhead pit production](#), *Washington Times*, Oct 2, 2025").

\*\*\*

In related news, available on our [pit page](#):

- [Former GOP Rep. Brandon Williams confirmed as Trump nukes chief after 'nuclear' option](#), *USA Today*, Sep 22, 2025
- ['People live here': Despite efforts by lab, county, many drivers in Los Alamos still feel roads are unsafe](#), *Santa Fe New Mexican*, with published comments by Greg Mello, Sep 13, 2025
- [Nuclear bomb-building plan faces sweeping Energy Department review](#), *USA Today*, Aug 28, 2025
- [Energy Department orders "special" investigation of plutonium pit problems](#), *Axios*, Aug 27, 2025

\*\*\*

Please see our daily-updated [Ukraine War page](#) for much better coverage of the largest and most consequential war in Europe in the last 80 years.

It is a real pity that the Democratic Party -- nationally and in this state -- fully supports war against Russia, and it is also a real pity that there is no peace or anti-war movement in New Mexico.

There IS a tiny, hesitant anti-genocide movement, which is wonderful as far as it goes, but that's all.

\*\*\*

This morning I commented for Russian state media (*TASS*) as follows:

Putin's offer to extend [the quantitative limits of] New START for a year is an overture that can and should be accepted without further U.S. analysis or delay. The analysis that went into New START is still applicable. It is in the interest of both parties to extend that Treaty. There is no need for "analysis paralysis." While there are minority voices within the U.S. calling for uploading more warheads to existing missiles, there are no plans or real reasons to do so. Neither is there any reason, or short-term capability, to add more delivery systems.

However if the U.S. supplies Tomahawk missiles to Ukraine, Russia could well withdraw its common-sense offer to freeze strategic nuclear deployments. Tomahawk missiles in Ukraine would be a serious strategic escalation.

To oversimplify but not by much, President Trump has to choose whether he wants to work toward peace, or take a big step toward war against Russia.

Greg, for the Study Group

# Los Alamos Study Group

*About us · Home · Contact · Contribute · Blog · Twitter · Search*

August 28, 2025

## **"Radiation contamination found in LANL's plutonium hub; safety board said protocols not followed," and some elephants in the room**

Dear friends --

Yesterday, the *Santa Fe New Mexican* (reporter, Alaina Mencinger) did a great job [following up](#) on a recently-posted [Weekly Site Report](#) from the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DNFSB) discussing a very sloppy situation discovered in the basement of the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) main plutonium facility (PF-4), with over 750,000 disintegrations per minute of contamination per 100 cm<sup>2</sup> of area. Several workers' booties were contaminated, waste bags were broken and oil had leaked out beneath. Rules were broken to say the least, and not for the first time.

I added the following comment:

In 2018, Congress requested an independent study of NNSA's pit production plan. That study was done by the Institute for Defense Analyses. It concluded, in part, that "[t]rying to increase production at PF-4 by installing additional equipment and operating a second shift is very high risk." (p. vii at [https://lasg.org/MPF2/documents/IDA-NNSA-plutonium-strategy-ES\\_Mar2019.pdf](https://lasg.org/MPF2/documents/IDA-NNSA-plutonium-strategy-ES_Mar2019.pdf)). Congress has ignored the study it commissioned. So has NNSA. The LANL contractor, headed by its factotum Thom Mason, just salutes and says, "Will do. Just give us the money please. We are good boys and girls."

At the time IDA did its study, NNSA was sure LANL could complete its preparations and start making 30 pits per year by 2026, at a total cost of \$3 billion (see slide 9 at [https://lasg.org/MPF2/documents/PlutoniumPitProductionAoA\\_Nov2017\\_9pg.pdf](https://lasg.org/MPF2/documents/PlutoniumPitProductionAoA_Nov2017_9pg.pdf).) Now, preparations won't be complete until at least the end of FY2032 (when the Los Alamos Plutonium Pit Production Project is complete; see p. 169 in NNSA's budget request at <https://lasg.org/budget/FY2026/doi-fy-2026-vol-1.pdf>) and the total cost will be several multiples higher than originally thought, so high that NNSA is reevaluating its options ([Gigantic Department of Energy program to make plutonium warhead cores \("pits"\) has overshot its budget and is being re-evaluated: NNSA has no analysis of alternatives supportive of its present pit plans.](#))

This month, the Department of Energy began freaking out about the runaway budgets and schedules at both production sites (LANL and the Savannah River Site) and has ordered a review, somewhat as we have been requesting ([Special Study of the NNSA's Leadership and Management of the Plutonium Pit Production Mission](#), and [Energy Department asks its Office of Enterprise Assessments\\* for "special study" of pit production "leadership and management"](#)).

At LANL, pit production has been roughly 7 years from fruition since 1996. The costs have been increasing steadily -- both the total costs and the forward costs from the date of each estimate. ([Estimated costs of acquiring reliable 30 ppy at LANL. \\$ billions](#), Aug 27, 2025. The labels on the x axis are currently missing and we will fix that today.) In other words, the more money that has been invested in LANL pit production, the more money has still needed to be invested to get to the ever-receding promised land of 30 pits per year. It is a self-licking plutonium ice cream cone. So far, LANL has produced one (1) pit, for its \$13 billion investment so far.

And no, we don't need the pits. There is nothing wrong with the pits we have (except their very existence). The whole program is to enable a new warhead that will allow the vastly over-budget Sentinel missile, if it is ever built, to be deployed with multiple warheads, or more prosaically, to pump up the NNSA warhead complex, Livermore lab especially, with new work, to the delight of interest-conflicted congresspersons.

The Senate Armed Services Committee, in its wisdom, reported a bill last month that would require 24/7 production at PF-4, and increase the production requirement at LANL to at least 80 pits each year, i.e. to an average of roughly 100 pits per year ([Senate bill would relax near-term production deadlines for nuclear warhead cores at Los Alamos, double outyear production requirements](#)). They did that because LANL, NNSA, and the Pentagon told them they could and should do that.

Underneath the headline in this story, LANL's plutonium facility has a problem with competence, training, and experience. Pushing new workers or any workers into overnight plutonium shift-work is a bad idea. LANL will do superficial studies of what went wrong, but LANL will not examine the basic premise involved, which speaks to errors made for political reasons at the very top of the lab. Thom Mason should have told NNSA right from the start that the IDA had a good point -- that it would be unwise and unsafe to make 24/7 production a baseline condition for LANL.

I could have added that NNSA itself did not want PF-4 to be a permanent pit production facility in 2017. In that year, NNSA was [looking forward to](#) the end of pit production there: "[A]fter a new 80 WR [War Reserve] ppy [pits per year] capability is established, PF-4 can return to the research and development mission for which it was built."

I also could have talked about just what these objects are, and what they do. They're the cores of city-killers, if so directed. Here's a 5:43 [video](#) of an Minuteman III being launched showing the full "stockpile to target sequence." As noted above, LANL's pits are for the successor to the MMIII, the Sentinel, assuming it is built.

You can virtually detonate a W87 (or any other) warhead over Santa Fe or Los Alamos using [Nukemap](#). The 300 kiloton W87-0 yield is roughly the (classified) yield of the W87-1 warheads that LANL's pits -- if any are ever made -- will be built for.

If the wind is right, the Santa Fe population would be pretty much all killed by the fallout from a large ground burst at LANL. Or Taos, if the wind blew that way.

In case it's not fresh in your memory -- and how could it be? -- here's the [launch portion of "The Day After" \(14:28\)](#).

Making these weapons is not a good use of anyone's precious life.

Greg, for the Study Group

# Los Alamos Study Group

*About us · Home · Contact · Contribute · Blog · Twitter · Search*

August 14, 2025

**More data showing that LANL does not produce economic development -- use it in your outreach! More data showing that LANL does not produce economic development -- use it in your outreach!**

Dear colleagues --

One of the most persistent and important myths surrounding Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) is that it creates "economic development."

Today's headlines about the Governor declaring a state of emergency in Española and its surrounding areas due to rising crime rates (see below, at the end of this message) provide an opportunity bring this subject into the public sphere again. Obviously, the addiction and crime problem in Rio Arriba County long precedes the fentanyl crisis, which has only made it worse.

If only it were possible to dispel this myth once and for all! Even many so-called "anti-nuclear" individuals and organizations place a premium on retaining LANL jobs, under the spell of this mistaken myth.

In a comment to the *Santa Fe New Mexican* article below I wrote:

In the murky world of "economic development" -- poorly defined, poorly understood, hyped and spun beyond all recognition -- this *political* development reminds us that for whatever set of reasons, the massive LANL employment in Rio Arriba County (RAC) has not created "economic development." Unless, of course, "economic development" is defined tautologically as spending money, which is precisely how most of our bought-and-paid-for political elite define it. "Economic development" has been de-linked from human purposes and values, reducing it to simple sums of money, which we are all trained to consider the highest human good. LANL's role in Rio Arriba County employment is massive. See ["If Los Alamos is bringing economic development to New Mexico, why is the neighboring County of Rio Arriba performing so poorly?"](#)

The 2,398 LANL employees residing in RAC pulled in \$291 million in LANL salaries in fiscal year 2023. This does not including the substantial sums paid to subcontractors. Since there were only 9,462 employees total in RAC that year, LANL employees comprise 31% of all employees in the County -- again not counting LANL subcontractors, of which there are hundreds.

Given the enormous economic influence of LANL on Rio Arriba's economy, the County's relative rankings within New Mexico in key social indicators can tell us, more than any other observable measure, how much "economic development" LANL really brings. That relative ranking within New Mexico in effect "cancels out" the effect of statewide variables and policies.

So what do we see in RAC? Despite over \$200 million in LANL jobs, plus more in subcontracting, we see that Rio Arriba ranks in the worse half of New Mexico counties in poverty overall, and has the 4th highest ranking in poverty of minors and elderly. It has the highest rate of accidental death of any New Mexico county, the second-highest rate of alcohol-related deaths and the highest rate of drug overdose deaths. Rio Arriba's per capita income, food security, and child food security rankings are in the bottom half of New Mexico counties. Rio Arriba County does poorly, despite all its LANL jobs.

This neither proves nor disproves that proximity to LANL, with all its high-paying jobs, has caused this poor economic and social performance. What it does prove, in broad-brush but irrefutable fashion, is that LANL is not any kind of "economic development" engine. Rio Arriba's problems continue despite 80 years of LANL spending, to the tune of approximately \$150 billion, total, in today's dollars.

New Mexico's congressional delegation believes that LANL creates economic development, and fiercely supports spending money -- any kind of money -- at LANL. **The data show that LANL does NOT create economic development. The political advocacy for LANL by the New Mexico delegation turns out to be an excuse, not a reason, for taking the easy, unthinking path of accepting LANL's political support and the substantial contributions available from its employees, who are contractors and thus not covered by the Hatch Act.**

As a former Air Force and Pentagon economist put it 20 years ago, "Those who think LANL creates economic development are people for whom 60 years of data are not enough." Now it's 80 years, and the most telling part of the region, the excuse for all the nuclear pandering, is doing worse than ever. Now, thanks to massive new spending at LANL, there is equally massive gentrification going on in LANL's commuter-shed. Housing costs are being jacked up. The *Albuquerque Journal* recently reported that less than 10% of RAC renters could afford to buy a median-priced home in the County. The inequality effects of LANL employment vastly overshadow whatever positive effects from spending money per se. LANL creates "an aura of apartheid" in its shadow, with overwhelming negative social and political effects. Our political leaders need treatment for LANL addiction, a form of political heroin. It's killing us.

It is not just Rio Arriba County that is failing to thrive despite oodles of LANL cash. It is the whole state -- although RAC is *especially* failing. See the important: ["Failing State: How New Mexico Ranks,"](#) table, updated Jul 25, 2025, which was assembled by Bex Hampton and Trish.

To modify a sarcastic remark of then-Mexican President Porfirio Diaz's, "Poor Rio Arriba County. So far from God, so close to Los Alamos."

Since the most recent update of that "Failing State" table, this new study appeared: ["Study ranks New Mexico as the worst state to live in"](#) (KRQE, Isaac Cruz, 8/11/25). The original rather detailed study is at [WalletHub](#). As we noted when we first published the "Failing State" table, such studies vary in quality and of course in utility for policy-makers (["Failing State: How New Mexico Ranks Despite massive spending over 8 decades and recent growth. New Mexico's nuclear labs have not brought economic development,"](#) Jan 8, 2025).

We have written about this myth for decades. See for example ["Does Los Alamos National Lab Help or Hurt the New Mexico Economy?"](#) Jul 2006 and ["Weapons Labs](#)

[and the Future of New Mexico: Problems, Prospects, Messages.](#)" May 15, 2007 briefing.

LANL is an economic "upas tree," exactly as in [Pushkin's poem of that name](#).

Please keep recruiting your friends and business acquaintances, your religious communities, etc. to the [Call for Sanity, Not Nuclear Production!](#) Write [Trish](#) if you want to volunteer!.

[Contribute](#) financially if you can!

We have some big news in preparation, but we thought you should see this first.

Best wishes,

Greg Mello

---

[https://www.santafenewmexican.com/news/local\\_news/new-mexico-governor-declares-crime-emergency-in-espa-ola/article\\_20806037-7557-467b-aab3-9adc2c7f6977.html](https://www.santafenewmexican.com/news/local_news/new-mexico-governor-declares-crime-emergency-in-espa-ola/article_20806037-7557-467b-aab3-9adc2c7f6977.html)

## New Mexico governor declares crime 'emergency' in Española

- [By Nicholas Gilmore ngilmore@sfnewmexican.com](#)
- Aug 13, 2025

Public officials in and around Española welcomed a move by the governor to boost funding for public safety, as they say their area is experiencing a crisis related to drugs and crime.

Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham declared a state of emergency Wednesday in Española and surrounding Rio Arriba County, pointing to rising crime and drug overdoses in the region.

The governor's proclamation authorizes about \$750,000 in funding for local governments. While the executive order the governor signed Wednesday gives the state adjutant general the authority to call on New Mexico National Guard members "to provide support to civil authorities as needed," a spokesperson for the Governor's Office said "there is no immediate order/move" to deploy Guard members in the Northern New Mexico city.

It isn't yet clear exactly how the money will be spent, but gubernatorial spokesperson Jodi McGinnis Porter said the funding will "facilitate coordinated support" for city, county and pueblo law enforcement agencies, "which may include officer overtime, public safety equipment, and multi-agency interventions" to address increases in crime and drug trafficking.

"We are making every resource available to support our local partners on the ground and restore public safety and stability to these areas that have been hardest hit by this crisis," Lujan Grisham stated in the release.

...The executive order states a "surge in criminal activity and addiction" has placed "an extraordinary burden" on local governments in the area, especially local police departments, and notes it has affected Santa Clara Pueblo and Ohkay Owingeh.

---

[https://www.abqjournal.com/news/article\\_7cea05f6-5516-4537-a7ac-01e42f51112a.html#tncms-source=home-featured-7-block](https://www.abqjournal.com/news/article_7cea05f6-5516-4537-a7ac-01e42f51112a.html#tncms-source=home-featured-7-block)

## Amid surge in drug overdoses, governor issues order targeting crime in Española area

- [By Dan Boyd / Journal Capitol Bureau](#)
- Aug 13, 2025

SANTA FE — In a move rife with political undertones, Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham on Wednesday announced an executive order declaring a state of emergency in Española and its surrounding areas due to rising crime rates.

The emergency order, which was issued in response to a request for help from local leaders and tribal officials, authorizes New Mexico National Guard troops to be deployed to Rio Arriba County to assist local law enforcement officers.

**It comes four months after the governor issued a similar emergency order authorizing a [National Guard deployment](#) in Albuquerque, which is ongoing.**

"When our local leaders called for help to protect their communities, we responded immediately with decisive action," Lujan Grisham said in a statement. "We are making every resource available to support our local partners on the ground and restore public safety and stability to these areas that have been hardest hit by this crisis."

**Rio Arriba County has long struggled with elevated drug abuse rates, and the county's [overdose death rate](#) was more than double the statewide average as of 2023.**

**This year, 49 overdose deaths have been recorded in Rio Arriba County — more than the 40 recorded all of last year, according to the Española Social Services Department.** Most of the fatal overdoses involved fentanyl.

Española Mayor Pro Tem Peggy Sue Martinez sent a recent letter to the governor for state-level help to address a surge in drug-related arrests, theft and violence that, she said, have caused police calls to more than double over the last two years.

"The scale and complexity of this crisis exceed the capacity of local resources," Martinez said.

The letter specifically requested a ramped-up state law enforcement presence in the city of about 10,000 people, along with more funding, crime-fighting technology and mental health professionals.

Similar letters requesting assistance were sent by Rio Arriba County Commission Chairman Brandon Bustos and two tribal leaders — Santa Clara Pueblo Gov. James Naranjo and Ohkay Owingeh Gov. Benny Lujan.

...State and local public safety officials are conducting an assessment to identify specific resource gaps and where the money can best be put to use, the governor's spokeswoman Jodi McGinnis Porter added.

Española City Councilor Sam LeDoux described the executive order as necessary to address an "out of control" crime problem.

"Fentanyl has overwhelmed our law enforcement, and this seems to be a step in the right direction to protecting our citizens," said LeDoux.

---

[^ back to top](#)

2901 Summit Place NE Albuquerque, NM 87106, Phone: 505-265-1200

# Los Alamos Study Group

*About us · Home · Contact · Contribute · Blog · Twitter · Search*

August 4, 2025

**If you can, please join us this week in recruiting opposition to building a nuclear weapons "pit" factory in Los Alamos**

Dear friends --

A few of us were able to speak at the Santa Fe City Council this past Wednesday. *Thank you, those who came!* We have been following up with the City and will continue to do so.

In honor of the nuclear victims of 1945, and to prevent other victims, we are making a big push this week to recruit additional supporters to the [Call for Sanity. Not Nuclear Production](#). A handful of volunteers are meeting in Santa Fe and Albuquerque this week to follow up on prospects. Memorials and commemorations are fine as far as they go, but they don't go far enough for the already-inspired and already-committed, especially when you've got a multi-billion-dollar nuclear weapons factory under construction in your neighborhood.

People don't realize how effective opposition has been. In New Mexico, it's been *very* effective, derailing plans for warheads requiring new pits (as the labs wrote in 2012) -- until recently. Santa Fe and northern New Mexico can again strike a real blow for peace, if we speak up!

If you want to help this week, contact [Trish](#) or [I](#) to join our little teams. Even a couple of hours can be a big help. We're already having a good time.

Even more efficiently, if you know of businesses, organizations, religious communities, or individuals you want to reach out to yourself, *please do!*

Each germ of resistance can spark others. But it's not strictly a matter of numbers. Truth is powerful. It is the "power of the powerless," as Vaclav Havel put it.

Wish us luck this week but even better, join us!

Greg, for the Study Group

---

[^ back to top](#)

2901 Summit Place NE Albuquerque, NM 87106, Phone: 505-265-1200

# Los Alamos Study Group

*About us · Home · Contact · Contribute · Blog · Twitter · Search*

July 28, 2025

**Join us this Wednesday at Santa Fe City Hall, 6:30 pm, to gently remind the City of its peace-oriented, anti-nuclear, anti-pit-production identity**

Dear friends --

As part of our [ramp-up in preparation for the Hiroshima and Nagasaki anniversaries](#), some of us will appear before the Santa Fe City Council this coming Wednesday, July 30, during the "Petitions from the Floor" comment period, which typically occurs around 7 pm. The Council will be meeting at City Hall, 200 Lincoln Ave.

We will remind the Council of the City's identification with its namesake, St. Francis, and his non-denominational, pan-religious message of peace.

We will point out the social, economic, and political importance of identification with peace in the present time. There are so many facets of this -- please help us on this theme in particular!

The City is a member of [Mayors for Peace](#), an international league of 8,497 cities entirely opposed to nuclear weapons. But the City hasn't acted like it lately. There are three LANL buildings in Santa Fe now. About 500 employees work in the City Different, according to LANL. [87% of LANL is devoted to nuclear weapons directly](#), and nearly all the rest supports nuclear weapons indirectly. LANL is a bomb lab that is trying to become a bomb plant.

LANL has been in communication with local land developers and "the Mayor's Team" to possibly construct "12-15 buildings" totaling "800,000 to 1,000,000 sq. ft." in what would be a new, "approximately 60" -acre Santa Fe campus. We have the emails. We had to sue the City to get them. We do not know the status of this project. The City is balking at supplying further information, That is something we will also ask about on Wednesday.

Strong, thoughtful City resolutions have opposed plutonium pit production at LANL specifically, as well as nuclear weapons in general (see for example [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)).

We will point out that for the first time, Santa Fe County has spoken out directly and clearly against LANL expansion and pit production ([Santa Fe County Commissioners Letter re: LANL SWEIS](#), "We firmly oppose any expansion of Los Alamos National Laboratory that continues to produce plutonium pits," Apr 8, 2025).

We want the City to reaffirm its opposition to plutonium pit production at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL). This gigantic program is by far the largest project ever undertaken in northern New Mexico. The cost of building and operating the LANL pit project through its (semi-)completion in 2032 will be about \$25 billion. This is, in constant dollars, *twenty (20) times what was spent at Los Alamos preparing to bomb Hiroshima and Nagasaki*.

A journalist just returning from Nagasaki asked me today, "How did we get here?" By "here," he meant a situation in which the U.S. nuclear warhead workforce has almost tripled in this century, with expanding factories for weapons of mass death -- for much, much larger weapons than the one dropped on Nagasaki. Santa Fe may host one of the most important of these -- the only one capable of supplying new plutonium pits for a new generation of land-based missiles. LANL pits are needed to support nuclear weapons labs and plants -- especially the one in California.

There are many answers to that reporter's question of course, some of which I suggested. But perhaps the simplest answer is, as I said to him, "We learned to love the money." It is Faust's bargain.

Don't take completion of this factory as a done deal. It isn't. It's vastly over budget and years behind schedule, as we have often pointed out.

It has other problems also. LANL's pit factory is a 1-minute drone flight from many public streets and roads. Uh-oh.

Will Santa Fe's greed pave the way for more Hiroshimas and Nagasakis? Or perhaps it will simply be Santa Fe's distractions, many of which have been engineered and supported to *avoid* the topic of building a pit factory a few miles from the City Different.

"How well we meant," recalled I. I. Rabi, reflecting on the Manhattan Project. (Here's Rabi, visiting Los Alamos in 1983, being interviewed by Bill Moyers of CBS News; he called LANL "[an abomination](#).")

In 1945, few really knew what they were doing, historically speaking, or knew what would follow. Today, there are no such excuses.

**We hope some of you will be able to join us at Santa Fe City Hall this Wednesday at 6:30 pm -- and if you are moved to do so, please speak. This is an opening event, a down payment as it were, in a campaign that will "take a minute or two." But don't doubt that we can win. Most of the world is behind us.**

**Finally, as a reminder please do contact us if you can in any way [join our efforts](#) during the week of 8/4-8/8! We need you!**

Have a wonderful evening,

Greg, for the Study Group

# Los Alamos Study Group

*About us · Home · Contact · Contribute · Blog · Twitter · Search*

July 27, 2025

**We hope you will join us during the week of 8/4 to 8/8 to help prevent more nuclear weapons victims -- work with us if you have any availability!**

---

Our most recent previous letter -- now so long ago -- to this New-Mexico-oriented subset of our main mailing list: [Looking for two half-time Santa Fe based outreach staff to help build opposition to a new nuclear arms race](#), Apr 11, 2025.

Why so long? Most of the time it's best to write to our whole mailing list, and/or to the news media. At the same time we don't want to slight in any way the importance of resistance to the new nuclear arms race *in New Mexico*. Here, where many of us live, we can do what is not possible elsewhere.

---

**Dear friends --**

First of all, we are deeply grateful for and humbled by your support, expressed in so many ways over the years, including recently.

Next, we hope you have taken note of the call to action in our recent [Bulletin](#) ("Please work with us during Hiroshima-Nagasaki week"):

For a number of reasons, we think the best way to honor the Hiroshima and Nagasaki victims and prevent more of them is to double and triple down on building opposition to making more nuclear weapons right here in our region...

**[We crave your help, preferably your in-person help, during the week of 8/4- 8/8, to recruit further public opposition to this factory.**

We will have work going on in Albuquerque here at our offices, in Santa Fe, and possibly also in Taos. There will be work happening elsewhere as well, but for reasons of morale, mutual education, and administrative simplicity we'd like people to be physically present at least once or twice during the week, if possible.

You don't have to help for the whole week to be very helpful, because as we never tire of saying, you have contacts we don't.

**Please tell us if, when, and where you can help, so we can plan. Write Trish.**

Third, and the other main reason we are sending this letter, are two fine op-eds recently published in the *Santa Fe New Mexican*. You might not have seen them and they deserve wider distribution, especially to activist leaders and others interested in nuclear disarmament and peace.

One, written by Jean Nichols, was published yesterday: "[It's past time for an energized peace movement.](#)" That link goes to an archived copy on our web site of what Jean said, along with a commentary by me (Greg). The two short essays are complementary and we urge you to read them both -- and forward them widely.

The other excellent op-ed of note was written by Dee Homans and published on July 19 under this title "[On this 80th anniversary, consider a non-nuclear future.](#)"

As a reminder, op-eds and letters-to-editors influence not only readers but also editors and subsequent reportage. Write them if you can!

Our plans for the Hiroshima-Nagasaki week are beginning to gel as folks step forward. Please do write us if you can help at all.

More soon, thank you,

Greg

---

[^ back to top](#)

2901 Summit Place NE Albuquerque, NM 87106, Phone: 505-265-1200

# Los Alamos Study Group

[About us](#) · [Home](#) · [Contact](#) · [Contribute](#) · [Blog](#) · [Twitter](#) · [Search](#)

April 11, 2025

## **We are looking for two half-time Santa Fe based outreach staff to help build opposition to a new nuclear arms race -- contact us if you think you might be interested**

Dear friends --

*Thank you very much for your support and help!*

As we said last time, we are making slow but solid progress. [What You Can Do](#) provides some ways to help. [Contribute!](#)

If you have not already done so, please endorse the [Call for Sanity not Nuclear Production!](#)

This letter will be brief; items of more general interest (of which there are many!) need to be kept back for the next full Bulletin and the ones after.

**First, the Study Group would like to hire two half-time, energetic, Santa-Fe-based, outreach persons to help build opposition to the new nuclear arms race!**

If you think you might be interested please send an application letter to [Trish](#). Attach any supplementary information you feel might be helpful in assessing your qualifications and motivations.

We are looking for idealistic people with their feet on the ground who are willing to work to prevent a new nuclear arms race, the literal "core" of which is happening in Los Alamos. As Brandon Williams, the Administration's nominee to head up the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), [said](#) earlier this week in his confirmation hearing, **"plutonium pit production was 'right at the heart' and [on] the 'critical path' to restoring the capability to either build new nuclear weapons or refurbish the existing stockpile."**

As readers of these letters know, we have stopped pit production preparations before and seek to do so again. Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) is already far behind schedule ("[DOE Secretary Wright says LANL will make "more than 100" pits by January 2029. Is this realistic? What purpose does it serve? Secretary Wright would do well to hearken to Senator Domenici's advice," Apr 2, 2025](#)).

None of us can live on ideals alone. For each of these two half-time positions, we are offering \$15/hour base pay, plus a bonus for every additional business, organization, or church that endorses the [Call for Sanity, Not Nuclear Production](#). We will provide continuous training, full-time support from the rest of the staff and our core volunteers in Santa Fe as well as camaraderie, and all materials that might be needed.

At present, we can only extend these jobs through the end of July. We will need to see what develops by then -- including what has been accomplished in this campaign, and what additional funds we can raise as a result.

By the way, we see this work as having a significant spiritual component. Success requires (and develops) organization, focus, awareness, and sensitivity. Social skills and ideological tolerance are required. Much more than sheer quantitative output -- "getting another sign-on" -- is involved. If you work with us, you will be our ambassadors, with all that implies.

Our Santa Fe and Albuquerque-based teams will be there to help you. Whoever does this work with us will find it to be a memorable and possibly a transformative experience.

**Second, on April 8, the Santa Fe County Board of County Commissioners unanimously approved a [letter](#) to NNSA which says, in its conclusion, "We firmly oppose any expansion of Los Alamos National Laboratory that continues to produce plutonium pits."**

This letter contained the County's comments on the draft Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement (SWEIS) for the continued operation of Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL).

We had advised them on this matter several times. The final language, while stilted, is stronger than the original draft, which supported the mis-named "No Action Alternative" and only opposed "expansion" of pit production, not pit production *per se*. (LANL has no pit production capacity. If it did it would be producing pits right now, as it is under a statutory obligation to do so. "Expansion is the wrong concept.")

**This letter is a step forward from prior County resolutions. It will be helpful in building opposition to pit production in the region.**

The County's draft had already made waves locally ([Santa Fe County commissioners raise concerns about LANL expansion possibilities](#), *Santa Fe New Mexican*, Mar 11, 2025) and in Washington, DC ("[Santa Fe commissioners leery of LANL expansion into Northern New Mexico](#)," *Exchange Monitor Morning Briefing*, 3/19/25).

Before closing this note, it might be good to remind readers that the so-called "No Action Alternative" in the draft SWEIS includes all preparations and operations for making not just at least 30 pits per year (ppy) but also *preparations for and operations comprising* so-called "surge" production of at least 80 ppy, which LANL is currently required by law to do by 2030 at the latest. They can't do that, but they have a mandate to try.

The NAA also includes 88 as-yet-unbuilt facilities totalling 1.47 million (M) square feet in combined size, plus 11 utility and facility upgrades on some 216 acres of land on-site ([pp. 3-7 to 3-10](#)), including the new power line across the Caja del Rio.

Finally, I also want to remind everybody that what the Study Group is doing locally is far from [all](#) we are doing. We very much appreciate your support.

More soon, thank you,

Greg

# Los Alamos Study Group

[About us](#) · [Home](#) · [Contact](#) · [Contribute](#) · [Blog](#) · [Twitter](#) · [Search](#)

March 20, 2025

**If you are local, we will meet outside the Santa Fe County chambers on Grant Avenue this coming Tuesday / While tens of thousands are homeless, LANL seeks new buildings totaling almost a Pentagon in size**

[Permalink](#) for this letter; prior [letters](#). To unsubscribe [send a blank email here](#). To subscribe [send a blank email here](#).

[Contribute!](#)

[Home page](#); [Press releases](#); [Bulletins](#); [Plutonium Pit Production](#); contact [Greg or Trish](#)

[What You Can Do](#)

[Ukraine war and peace page](#)

## Recent emails:

- Our most recent [Activist Letter](#) (this list): [Turning point: Whither LANL pit production and the new nuclear arms race? It depends on all of us -- please help!](#) (03/18/2025)
- Our most recent [Bulletin](#), sent to our whole mailing list: [Bulletin 356: LANL SWEIS presentation, talking points](#) (2/9/25).
- Our most recent [Press Release](#) (also sent to whole mailing list): [DOE Secretary Wright visits Los Alamos and Sandia, where he is getting the "company line"](#), Feb 24, 2025

## Contents:

1. **If you are local, this is an invitation to meet at the Santa Fe County Commission this coming Tuesday afternoon at 2:45 pm, before public comment at circa 3:45 pm.**
2. **The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) proposes to construct 219 new facilities at LANL, with a total floor area almost equal to the Pentagon. And more.**
3. **"Reality pressure" is however coming from realities local and national. Unprecedented opportunity beckons.**

## Dear friends --

First, thank you very much for your support and help! We are making slow but solid progress. [What You Can Do](#) provides some ways to help, not least of which is to send a financial contribution. One of our dear friends reminded us that we tend to bury the ever-present need for financial help, so this time I am putting it right up front!

**1. If you are near Santa Fe and free in the latter half of this coming Tuesday afternoon (3/25/25), we can meet on the second floor of the Santa Fe County building at 102 Grant Avenue (the John Gaw Meem Building; [map](#)) at 2:45 pm, to talk about recent developments.**

Some of those who wish to do so can then make public comments during the public comment period, which will begin at roughly 3:45 pm. One can pre-register to speak at this [link](#) but it is not necessary to do so.

[Why there and why now?](#) The County is [trying](#) to oppose adding to the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) footprint ("[Santa Fe County commissioners raise concerns about LANL expansion possibilities](#)," *Santa Fe New Mexican*, 3/11/25).

We previously sent the County background for a letter they will send to NNSA on this topic, if the Board of Commissioners approves it. We also commented on their [draft](#), which was the basis of the *New Mexican* article. According to the current agenda (find it [here](#)), the commissioners will NOT take up the letter Tuesday, leaving calendar time for public comment this Tuesday. Presumably the County will take up the final letter on April 8, their last meeting before the formal comment period on LANL expansion ends.

[We would rather the County not have any letter than one which endorses pit production](#), as the County's present draft does, by endorsing the so-called "No Action Alternative" in the draft LANL Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement (SWEIS). The "No Action Alternative" (NAA) includes pit production up to 80 pits per year (ppy), and 88 as-yet-unbuilt facilities totalling 1.47 million (M) square feet, plus more than 34 utility and facility upgrades that cover some 216 acres of land. Does that sound like "no action?" Hardly.

Commissioner Hughes said he would amend the draft based on some of our comments. Which ones, and how? We don't know.

We will bring a list of the businesses and organizations endorsing the "[Call to Sanity, Not Nuclear Production](#)" to this meeting, and we will speak to the importance of opposing all pit production at LANL.

The County's tentative opposition to LANL expansion has already made minor waves in Washington, DC ("[Santa Fe commissioners leery of LANL expansion into Northern New Mexico](#)," *Exchange Monitor Morning Briefing*, 3/19/25). For background, see this [list](#) of local government resolutions. Being "leery" is not new. A firm statement at this time would be wonderful.

## Please join us if you can.

**2. Altogether, NNSA's preferred "Expanded Operations Alternative" (EOA) for LANL involves constructing 219 new facilities with a total floor area of 5.83 M sq. ft.**

By the numbers:

- NNSA's preferred alternative (the EOA) adds up to 5.83 M sq. ft. of new construction. By comparison, the Pentagon has 6,500,000 sq. ft. of interior space.
- The EOA includes 219 new facilities, PLUS more than 100 upgrades, and utility and infrastructure projects totaling 1,190 acres (1.86 sq. miles). It ALSO includes 13,935 acres (21.8 sq. miles) of forest thinning, some of which is habitat for the Mexican Spotted Owl and Jemez Salamander.
- In the "Modernized Operations Alternative" and the preferred EOA there is also 2.85 M sq. ft. of facility demolition, meaning the net new floor area in the EOA is 2.98 M sq. ft.
- As previously noted, in the so-called NAA there are 88 new facilities totaling 1.47 M sq. ft. PLUS more than 34 upgrades, utility, and infrastructure projects totaling 216 acres.

- The NAA includes all preparations for pit production, both for the baseline level of "at least 30 pits per year" and for the "surge capacity" to "at least 80 pits per year."

### 3. "Reality pressure" is however coming from realities local and national. Unprecedented opportunity beckons.

I mentioned this in our last letter but so many people are discouraged it is important to mention it again. Quoting from a letter we recently wrote to a possible funder:

President Trump has proposed negotiations with Russia and China to halt production of new nuclear weapons, saying we have too many already, and he has also proposed mutual deep cuts in military spending in each country. Meanwhile negotiations to restore normal relations with Russia based on common security and economic cooperation, including ending the Ukraine war, have already begun. **In short, we have an almost unprecedented opportunity for nuclear arms control, disarmament, and peace, one we must seize with both hands.** Yes, it comes with a new lexicon and a different worldview, one not based on a Western-supervised "rules based international order." *That* (dis)order is already gone, never to return. Meanwhile the "nuclear state" inside and outside government, including some in the NGO and think-tank community, is already strenuously resisting cuts. **We need to put all our weight on the side of deep cuts in the military-nuclear complex. It is an "all-hands-on-deck" moment for the NGO community.** We must recognize the enormous opportunities available, and seize them.

Above all, we've got to ditch the ridiculous Russophobia, which has developed into something like a mental disease, especially in Europe. You may enjoy and find this useful: "[Russophobia and Sinophobia: projection, narcissism and denial](#)," Kari McKern, *Pearls and Irritations*, Mar 7, 2025).

More another time, thank you,

Greg, Trish, Bex, for the Los Alamos Study Group

---

[^ back to top](#)

2901 Summit Place NE Albuquerque, NM 87106, Phone: 505-265-1200

# Los Alamos Study Group

*About us · Home · Contact · Contribute · Blog · Twitter · Search*

March 18, 2025

## Turning point: Whither LANL pit production and the new nuclear arms race? It depends on all of us -- please help!

[Permalink](#) for this letter. Prior [letters](#) to this New-Mexico-oriented list.

**To unsubscribe, send a blank email [here](#).**

Do your interested New Mexico friends get these updates? Why not forward this letter to them! **To subscribe, send a blank email [here](#).**

**\*\*\*If you have not already done so, please endorse the [Call for Sanity not Nuclear Production!](#) Commitment is contagious. Please help us recruit businesses, organizations, and individuals!\*\*\***

[Home page](#); [Press releases](#); [Bulletins](#); [Plutonium Pit Production](#)

Our blog: [Remember your Humanity](#), [Twitter](#) (inactive at present)

[Contribute](#), Volunteer: [What You Can Do](#), Contact [Greg](#) or [Trish](#).

**Our [Ukraine crisis page](#), updated more or less daily. Trump and Putin spoke this morning about how to end the war. See our [Ukraine page](#) tomorrow for a selection of independent analysis.**

**This is a letter to our New Mexico-oriented activist mailing list, a subset of our whole mailing list. If you missed our most recent emails, they come in three forms:**

- o Our most recent **Bulletin**, sent to our whole mailing list: [Bulletin 356: LANL SWEIS presentation, talking points](#) (2/9/25).
- o **Press Releases** since our last Letter, also sent to this big list: [DOE Secretary Wright visits Los Alamos and Sandia, where he is getting the "company line"](#), Feb 24, 2025
- o Our most recent **Activist Letter** sent to this list: [SWEIS debrief and next steps -- in-person and Zoom meeting this Thursday in Albuquerque](#) (2/18/25)

**Dear friends --**

Although the overall situation is highly volatile and could go either way, there are very real possibilities for lowering nuclear tensions and yes, halting the new nuclear arms race.

We believe it is the most promising time for nuclear disarmament since 2010, when Obama turned away from disarmament, striking a "deal" to modernize or replace every single nuclear warhead, delivery platform, and factory in return for Senate ratification of a treaty (New START), which did not disarm anything. Later, Obama rejected a tremendous opportunity, handed to him on a silver platter as it were, to negotiate real cuts to the stockpile.

Then came Russiagate, the Ukraine coup d'etat, and all that has followed.

Now a fresh wind is blowing. There are new opportunities. Some flow from long-standing problems in the National Nuclear Security Administration's (NNSA)'s warhead complex and the massive Department of Defense nuclear procurement programs. These programs face forces majeure from workforce and supply-chain challenges (to pick the top two), as well as fundamental infrastructure and geographic problems for which there are no easy fixes and therefore are less talked about.

And then there is President Trump, who actually wants to make peace with Russia and is trying to do that as I write.

Trump has himself highlighted the waste of money involved in nuclear weapons on multiple occasions, without journalist prompting. This is far from a guarantee that nuclear weapons programs will be cut -- they could be strengthened -- but it is not nothing either.

Trump's domestic agenda cannot survive an arms race and he knows it.

Trump's comments aren't random for another reason as well. He will clearly remember being manipulated -- blackmailed, under threat of impeachment -- into a higher NNSA budget than the Department of Energy (DOE) and his own White House staff wanted by a tiny cabal that included then-NNSA Administrator Lisa Gordon Hagerly. Afterwards, she was placed under surveillance by the DOE Secretary and then just after the 2020 election, she was summarily fired.

**Peace with Russia may be breaking out, but here in New Mexico spending on plutonium warhead core ("pit") production at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) is running full steam ahead.**

**Despite decades of successful opposition, New Mexico is running the risk of normalizing pit production at LANL -- even as LANL struggles to actually do it.**

The entire New Mexico congressional delegation certainly wants as much spending and therefore as many pits per year as possible.

Santa Fe County apparently wants pit production too. In its draft comments on the LANL Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement (SWEIS), the County says it likes the "No Action Alternative," which includes LANL pit production (right on up to 80 pits per year, as is still required by [law](#)). (Perhaps we can convince them to change their minds -- we'll write about that later.)

Many liberal NGOs want also pit production at LANL -- not too much, but not too little either. (Some of these groups often say they don't want "expanded" pit production, as if there was some production going on. There isn't. LANL has produced exactly one (1) certified pit since 2011, and only 31 since 1949.)

**So how is LANL doing at its huge new job, which the new arms race requires? Answer: Terribly.**

In 13 days, we will reach the half-way mark in fiscal year 2025. Where are the 20 "War Reserve" pits LANL is required by law to make this year? Answer: So far, nowhere to be seen.

And what ever happened to NNSA's commitment to produce "a minimum of 50-80 pits per year in 2022 at LANL?"

Long story short, LANL has failed in this mission four times so far. [The fifth failure is in process](#). Acquisition (by 2026) of LANL's 30 pit per year mission was budgeted at \$3 billion (B) as recently as 2018. What happened to that? That cost is \$22 B now -- assuming it ever happens, which is a big assumption at this point.

**We need to push back harder. "Once more, into the breach!"**

**Please, please, help us! By signing up businesses and organizations (nonprofit and religious) to the [Call for Sanity, Not Nuclear Production](#), you can make a really huge difference. Individual signers help too! We now have 254 institutional endorsers and 1,172 individuals. We will change official minds here in this**

**state and in Washington DC but we want to do it faster, so this state can begin to heal. The outreach you do, and the endorsements you help us get, are foundational.**

**You have contacts we do not have. A few minutes reaching out to them would make a wonderful difference. That's what we want you to do, if you can.**

Very best wishes,

Greg, Trish, and Bex

---

[^ back to top](#)

2901 Summit Place NE Albuquerque, NM 87106, Phone: 505-265-1200

# Los Alamos Study Group

*About us · Home · Contact · Contribute · Blog · Twitter · Search*

February 18, 2025

**SWEIS debrief and next steps -- in-person and Zoom meeting this Thursday 2/20/25 at 6:30 pm in Albuquerque (to attend by Zoom you must register in advance)**

[Permalink](#) for this letter. Prior [letters](#) to this New-Mexico-oriented list.

To **unsubscribe**, [send a blank email here](#).

Do your interested New Mexico friends get these updates? Why not forward this letter to them! To **subscribe**, [send a blank email here](#).

**\*\*\*If you have not already done so, please endorse the [Call for Sanity not Nuclear Production!](#) Commitment is contagious. Please help us recruit businesses, organizations, and individuals!\*\*\***

[Home page](#); [Press releases](#); [Bulletins](#); [Plutonium Pit Production](#)

Our blog: [Remember your Humanity](#), [Twitter](#) (inactive at present)

[Contribute](#), Volunteer: [What You Can Do](#), Contact [Greg or Trish](#).

**Our [Ukraine crisis page](#), updated more or less daily with fresh news and analyses. There is a tremendous amount of news regarding U.S.-EU relations and U.S.-Russian negotiations to end the Ukraine war, which have begun. To accomplish this, at least some steps toward a new mutual security architecture -- will be necessary. We have posted some of the best analysis of these rapid developments [here](#).**

**This is a letter to our New Mexico-oriented activist mailing list, a subset of our whole mailing list. If you missed our most recent emails, here they are:**

- Our most recent **Bulletin**, sent to our whole mailing list: [Bulletin 355: Francis Boyle, RIP / New START countdown](#), Feb 3, 2025
- Our most recent **Press Release**, also sent to our whole mailing list: [Citizens decry years-long tardiness, lack of democracy in hearings on future of Los Alamos National Laboratory](#), Feb 10, 2025
- Our most recent **Letter**, sent to this smaller mailing list: [Urgent planning and background sessions this WEDNESDAY EVENING IN SANTA FE and this THURSDAY EVENING IN ALBUQUERQUE pertaining to NNSA hearings Feb. 11-13 about LANL's future. Help spread the word!](#), Feb 2, 2025

**Key "heads-up" in this letter: we will have an in-person and Zoom SWEIS de-brief and "next steps" meeting this Thursday 2/20/25 at 6:30 pm (Mountain Time) at our offices in Albuquerque, 2901 Summit Place NE ([map](#)).**

**If you plan to attend by Zoom, you must register at <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/qVbN51U7RmqMQi8TNhj-oA>. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.**

Dear friends --

The charade of Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement (SWEIS) hearings is over. We are pleased that not one person spoke in favor of plutonium warhead core ("pit") production at LANL, and nearly everyone spoke against it. Many people, possibly even most, also spoke out against the SWEIS process in one way or another. Almost everyone spoke authentically and eloquently, which is so inspiring and uplifting to us here. Every person provided a unique perspective, such that there was actually very little repetition. Every voice was fresh and real.

All in all, we feel quite good about the public's participation in these hearings. You and we did well.

The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) did not undertake these hearings to hear public comments, however. They did so to check a bureaucratic box so they could continue to do what they want to do with the minimum amount of resistance from "we the people." The hearings were offered as pacifiers, but the public was not and is not pacified. Nonviolent, yes, but not pacified.

Unless we can talk NNSA into posting their videos of the hearings, we will be posting our own and others' videos of citizen testimony and protest. If we do not post what we have, parties which were not present (physically or on-line) will not be able to understand the inspiring character of what went on.

Here are two representative news articles and a short video:

- [Public rails against plutonium pit production during LANL meeting](#), *New Mexico Political Report*, Feb 12, 2025
- [Critics at hearing speak out against expansion plan, pit production at LANL](#), *Santa Fe New Mexican*, Feb 11, 2025
- [New Mexicans say 'No' to a new plutonium bomb factory in Los Alamos](#), short video, *Breakthrough News*, Feb. 15, 2025

The *New Mexican* article was the only mainstream one that mentions the protest organized at the second Santa Fe hearing by the Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL), which was a high point of the hearings.

Our social media followup from this meeting ([our own](#), [BT News](#)) has already reached almost a hundred thousand people.

Here at the Study Group we will conclude our SWEIS participation at this time by filing some basic written comments regarding the overarching illegitimacy of this process, and perhaps a few other issues. We will not be providing peer review for the Draft SWEIS. You can of course [comment](#) too, although it is generally a waste of time. The comment period is currently slated to close on March 11.

So what's next? That's what we want to discuss with you on Thursday. Tremendous changes are afoot. See the box above for more on the physical and virtual locations of this important meeting.

We will follow up this local letter with a Bulletin discussing more of what we think can be done at this time, to stop the pit factory and also gear up for ending the Ukraine War and nuclear disarmament nationwide.

Sincerely,

Greg Mello, for the Study Group

**NO NEW NUCLEAR ARMS RACE WITH RUSSIA AND CHINA! • CANCEL SENTINEL!  
NO U.S WAR WITH RUSSIA & CHINA! • FUND PEOPLES' NEEDS-NOT PLUTONIUM PITS!**

# POST-SWEIS DEBRIEF

**THURSDAY,  
FEBRUARY 20  
6:30-8:30PM**



📍  
**LOS ALAMOS  
STUDY GROUP  
OFFICE**  
2901 SUMMIT PL NE  
ALBUQUERQUE  
**TO JOIN VIRTUALLY  
DM US FOR A LINK**

# WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

LOS ALAMOS  STUDY GROUP

[^ back to top](#)

2901 Summit Place NE Albuquerque, NM 87106, Phone: 505-265-1200

# Los Alamos Study Group

[About us](#) · [Home](#) · [Contact](#) · [Contribute](#) · [Blog](#) · [Twitter](#) · [Search](#)

February 2, 2025

**Urgent planning and background sessions this WEDNESDAY EVENING IN SANTA FE and this THURSDAY EVENING IN ALBUQUERQUE pertaining to NNSA hearings Feb. 11-13 about LANL's future. Help spread the word!**

[Permalink](#) for this letter. Prior [letters](#) to this New-Mexico-oriented list.

To **unsubscribe**, [send a blank email here](#).

Do your interested New Mexico friends get these updates? Why not forward this letter to them! To **subscribe**, [send a blank email here](#).

**\*\*\*if you have not already done so, please endorse the [Call for Sanity not Nuclear Production!](#) Commitment is contagious. Please help us recruit businesses, organizations, and individuals!\*\*\***

[Home page](#); [Press releases](#); [Bulletins](#); [Plutonium Pit Production](#)

Our blog: [Remember your Humanity](#). [Twitter](#) (inactive at present)

[Contribute](#). Volunteer: [What You Can Do](#). Contact [Greg](#) or [Trish](#).

Our [Ukraine crisis page](#), updated more or less daily with fresh news and analyses. In brief: "Ukraine" (i.e. Ukraine+NATO, principally the US) is losing people, machines, and territory at an accelerating pace. Ukraine has lost the war and badly needs peace, as more and more people are realizing. This perspective is even trickling into the mainstream media. Read about it on our [Ukraine page](#).

This is a letter to our New Mexico-oriented activist mailing list, a subset of our whole mailing list. If you missed our most recent emails, here they are:

- Our most recent [Bulletin](#), sent to our whole mailing list: Bulletin 354: [Thank you! / Fundraising drive continues / "How New Mexico Ranks"](#) (12/23/24)
- Our most recent [Press Release](#), also sent to our whole mailing list: [In Los Alamos, Scott Ritter and Dmitri Trenin discuss paths to peace in Ukraine; other resources](#) (1/20/25)
- Our most recent [Letter](#), sent to this smaller mailing list: [Crunch time! Please come to the LANL Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement Hearings Feb. 11-13. Help spread the word! \(Part I\)](#) (01/23/2025)

Dear friends:

It is an important moment in New Mexico nuclear history. **We are being challenged as to whether we will, or will not, oppose a large new nuclear weapons factory in the state and all that will come from it, from more nuclear waste to even more nuclear weapons and related missions. What's at stake is nothing less than the overall direction of the state.**

To discuss our response, we are hosting two urgent community planning and background sessions this week:

- Wednesday 2/5/25 from 6 to 8 pm at St. John's United Methodist Church in Santa Fe (1200 Old Pecos Trail, [map](#))**
- Thursday evening 2/6/25 from 5:30 to 8 pm at the Albuquerque Center for Peace and Justice (202 Harvard Drive SE, [map](#)).**

**We urge everyone interested in nuclear issues, or in the economic and social future of the state, to come to one of these meetings.**

These meetings are preparatory to the upcoming National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) hearings regarding the future of the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), to be held the following week at these locations and times:

- Tuesday, February 11, 2025**, 1:00-4:00 pm (Virtual Meeting: 1:30-4:00 pm), Santa Fe Community Convention Center, Sweeney Ballroom, 201 W. Marcy St., Santa Fe, NM 87501 ([map](#))
- Tuesday, February 11, 2025**, 5:00-8:00 pm (Virtual Meeting: 5:30-8:00 pm), Santa Fe Community Convention Center, Sweeney Ballroom
- Wednesday, February 12, 2025**, 5:00-8:00 pm, Mision y Convento, 405 N. Paseo de Onate, Española, NM 87532 ([map](#))
- Thursday, February 13, 2025**, 5:00-8:00 pm, Fuller Lodge, 2312 Central Ave., Los Alamos, NM 87544 ([map](#))

The [Draft Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement \(SWEIS\) for LANL](#) is ostensibly the vehicle by which the future of LANL will be discussed at these hearings, as we explained in our previous [letter](#). NNSA wants our buy-in to the process, not just the product. If they get the former, they've got the latter too.

We could comment about the SWEIS in detail in this letter -- and there will be time for that -- but that would miss the main point. We'd be falling into a trap. We come to bury the SWEIS, not to praise it.

As we said last time, the SWEIS comes after far too many decisions, and the hearings this month are designed to strip democratic agency from civil society -- from you and me -- not to provide it. NNSA is not there to listen to you. It's providing a sophisticated way to take your voice away from you.

But we can't just stay away. In many other states, people can. Not here. This cancer is being thrust on us, and it will grow further if we don't kill it. We're "all in," whether we want to be or not.

New Mexico is in many ways [a failing state](#). We are told we are dependent on the labs all the time. Just this morning, a [Santa Fe New Mexican editorial](#) began, "[i]t's hardly a secret that New Mexico depends on federal largesse to function, from funding for its national laboratories and military bases to dollars that support social welfare programs or pay for necessary infrastructure repairs and construction."

There you have it. What a lazy point of view, from such an exalted pulpit! [Peggy Pond Church](#) thought differently, as she told me: "Los Alamos lab is the worst thing that

ever happened to this state." Peggy's is the wiser vision. LANL (and its offshoot Sandia National Laboratories) have brought nothing of net value to this state.

I am just coming from a week in Washington, half of which was spent with 670 fellow registrants at the so-called "Nuclear Deterrence Summit," mostly nuclear weapons managers and senior employees of one kind or another. It's not pleasant, but we do learn a lot from such meetings. From conferences like this and several hundred meetings on Capital Hill with congressional and executive staff over the past decade and a half, and from 20 years of lobbying and policy work before that, I can tell you an open secret: the nuclear-military state has by now all but conquered the constitutional institutions of the U.S. government. There is very little congressional oversight going on. The nuclear weapons lobby is in charge.

There are however powerful limits within the system itself -- in its labor supply, in the consciences of the human beings working in it, in its material supply chains, in what the President decides to do (that may in fact differ what the bureaucracies and contractors want) -- and in its degree of public acceptance, which conditions everything.

**While mere opinion doesn't matter in itself, opposition expressed in the public domain DOES matter, especially if it is factual and expresses commonly-held values and widely-felt human needs. The nuclear-military state needs our silent concurrence to maintain its facade of legitimacy and its social acceptance, which are necessary for it to operate. It needs our tacit permission to continue using and abusing New Mexico, as continues to milk the federal government as a whole.**

We're a nuclear "company state" here, as our former board president Zia Mian recently put it.

Now, to help maintain the facade and help the nuclear arms race, all we have to do is to either

1. skip the hearings, or
2. go to these hearings, pretend they are democratic, and register our comments.

**The third option is to make these hearings serve our cause, using them as rallying opportunities against plutonium pit production, LANL expansion, and against the political leadership class that has brought these insults to our communities.** (It was not originally NNSA's idea to make LANL a pit factory -- not without a big new building anyway, which some of us helped bring to an end.)

That is, we need to use the hearings creatively, not just line up like sheep to the slaughter. We need to meet with each other to plan, strategically and tactically. Hundreds of organizations and business and thousands of individuals are with us, but that latent political power only manifests when people come together.

If LANL is allowed as much as they have put into their "No Action Alternative," *which includes a legal requirement to do as much plutonium pit production as is physically possible, as fast as possible*, NNSA will a) add even more nuclear missions and facilities, b) also capture more control over the state's political and economic future. Affordable housing in Santa Fe or anywhere nearby? Forget about it.

#### **More about pit production in particular**

First and foremost, pit production at LANL is not a "done deal," as so many will tell you. There are many arms control and "antinuclear" organizations, and many politicians, who want all U.S. pit production to occur at LANL and worked to make that happen when NNSA did not want it to happen in LANL's old plutonium facility at all.

All of us who endorsed the [Call for Sanity, not Nuclear Production](#) oppose all pit production, first and foremost at LANL.

Many people think pit production is already underway. It is not. At the moment, it's virtually non-existent. LANL has made exactly one (1) pit for the stockpile since 2012 and only 31 stockpile pits across the 76 years since 1949. Between 1945 and 1949, LANL made 50 simple pits before the Atomic Energy Commission complied with the wishes of LANL management and open production plants elsewhere (at first, in Hanford, WA, and then at the Rocky Flats Plant in CO).

It's a mission LANL never wanted and never had, until Heinrich and Udall told them to "go for it" and organized the senatorial muscle to make it happen in and "for" New Mexico, with then-congresscritters Ben Ray Lujan and his cousin Michelle Lujan Grisham playing important supporting roles. Steve Pearce jumped on the porkwagon as well, providing the "bipartisanship" necessary to get a successful House floor vote on making LANL the "plutonium science and production center of excellence for the U.S.", enforced by statutory deadlines (that are now in the rear-view mirror, unmet).

Shortly afterward, the then-new Trump appointee at NNSA, Lisa Gordon-Hagerty, overturned prior staff decisions and split the plutonium baby, giving more or less half the money to each of two states and accelerating pit production via the Los Alamos program to satisfy the neocons.

At present the start date for actual production (as opposed to the first "trophy pit," as LANL called it last week) is uncertain, as is

- o the scale of production to be reached at different dates,
- o the number of production shifts while it is happening,
- o the workforce needed,
- o when production at LANL will end (although we know it will end),
- o what it will cost, and
- o what its day-to-day and cumulative environmental and community impacts will be.

None of this is known because NNSA has not produced even a draft schedule or cost for pit production at LANL. Nor has NNSA published a so-called "baseline" schedule and cost estimate for the construction needed, or for that matter, even a list of construction projects, or even a prospective campus plan. Nothing is known as yet as to what other large plutonium missions LANL may have in the future, or what additional plutonium facilities NNSA may want to build at LANL.

People who think they know these things don't. NNSA itself doesn't know them. Neither does the Government Accountability Office (GAO), or the White House.

The future of LANL's plutonium missions is therefore much less constrained than many people realize. They assume (wrongly) that NNSA must have clear plans for what they are doing, given that the cost of acquiring pit production is going to be at least as great in constant dollars as the entire Manhattan Project (with about half of that sum going to LANL).

NNSA does have plans, but they are somewhat fluid. As for LANL pit production construction, plans are (remarkably) still in an early stage (despite being in progress since 2020). Completion is expected no sooner than 2032. Costs could easily increase 50% over today's estimates by then.

But where will the money come from? It's not as easy as just asking for, and getting, more. The whole budget agreement in Congress would have to be re-jiggered, according to senior congressional budget auditors in a meeting we held with them last week. *NNSA is in denial about what the arms race it is embarking upon will really cost.*

The real kickers are scale, risks, and duration. Will LANL make 5, 10, or 40 pits per year? "We the people" in New Mexico got NNSA to commit to keeping pit production below 20 ppy on four or five prior occasions. In practice it never went above 11 ppy (and it did that for only one year.) That level was enough to maintain knowledge and train new technicians, and still is. It's not great, but it doesn't require two shifts and it doesn't provide enough pits for a new warhead. Pit production at some low, *de minimus* level is not a new mission for LANL. All the science, all the stockpile surveillance, all the pit aging studies, all the heat source plutonium work, and all the surplus plutonium disposition work now underway could still be done. LANL would not need 4,105 staff members in its pit program as it does now, plus hundreds more subcontractors building up the site and facilities. The cost of that small program was minimal. Today's cost is vast, uncapped.

That's the scale problem.

The risks, whatever they are, increase with the number of people involved and throughput of products. PF-4 was [designed](#) to house about 100 workers; by 2020 it was housing a thousand. Most of them are relatively inexperienced. What could go wrong? Plenty, of course.

So if LANL makes pits, for how long will it do so? Again, no one knows. **The highest possible source privately told me this week that the Savannah River Plutonium Processing Facility (SRPPF) can, when complete, "do the full [pit] mission."** That is precisely the plan, as the top Senate committee staff member on this issue told me two years ago. "What," I asked, "is the plan when PF-4 can no longer make pits? Do you have a plan to replace PF-4?" "The replacement," he said, "is Savannah River."

NNSA loosely [estimates](#) the PF-4 end of life to lie in the 2045 range, up from the previous 2039. It really depends on what safety standards are applied. At present, PF-4 does not operate with complete, modern safety standards. Allowances are made, so NNSA can have one operating plutonium processing facility. There is no other one. As PF-4 and its subsystems age, some of these systems will be replaced, but at some point the safety allowances that have to be made will shut down production -- hopefully before, not after, too many accidents. NNSA's goal is to have SRPPF up and running before that decision has to be made.

This begs the question everybody should be asking: **why do pit production in PF-4 at all?** Why not wait for the new, safer, larger facility that can handle the whole mission, and work like hell to re-start arms control with Russia and China in the meantime? Why not save billions of dollars, tons of transuranic waste, dozens of future highway accidents, and so much more by simply waiting a few years? Pits aren't aging fast enough to make LANL pits important as replacements for anything.

So again, why LANL? The answer is all too simple: RussiaRussiaRussia, ChinaChinaChina, and porkporkpork for New Mexico and the whole nuclear warhead complex, which is already starting to feed off the new Livermore warhead for which LANL would supply the pits.

Please come on Wednesday or Thursday, if you can.

Sincerely,

Greg Mello, for the Sudy Group

# Los Alamos Study Group

[About us](#) · [Home](#) · [Contact](#) · [Contribute](#) · [Blog](#) · [Twitter](#) · [Search](#)

January 23, 2025

## Crunch time! Please come to the LANL Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement Hearings Feb. 11-13. Help spread the word! (Part I)

[Permalink](#) for this letter (tomorrow). Prior [letters](#) to this New-Mexico-oriented list.

To unsubscribe, [send a blank email here](#).

Do your interested New Mexico friends get these updates? Why not forward this letter to them! To subscribe, [send a blank email here](#).

**\*\*\*If you have not already done so, please endorse the [Call for Sanity not Nuclear Production!](#) Commitment is contagious. Please help us recruit businesses, organizations, and individuals!\*\*\***

[Home page](#); [Press releases](#); [Bulletins](#); [Plutonium Pit Production](#)

Our blog: [Remember your Humanity](#). [Twitter](#) (inactive at present)

[Contribute](#), Volunteer: [What You Can Do](#). Contact [Greg](#) or [Trish](#).

Our [Ukraine crisis page](#), updated more or less daily with fresh news and analyses. In brief: "Ukraine" (i.e. Ukraine+NATO, principally the US) is losing people, machines, and territory at an accelerating pace. Ukraine has lost the war and badly needs peace. Russia has offered peace terms, from which negotiations could begin. Trump is [already stumbling](#).

This is a letter to our New Mexico-oriented activist mailing list, a subset of our whole mailing list.

- Our most recent [Bulletin](#), sent to our whole mailing list: Bulletin 354: [Thank you! / Fundraising drive continues / "How New Mexico Ranks"](#) (12/23/24)
- Our most recent [Press Release](#), also sent to our whole mailing list: [In Los Alamos, Scott Ritter and Dmitri Trenin discuss paths to peace in Ukraine; other resources](#) (1/20/25)
- Our most recent [Letter](#), sent to this smaller mailing list: [Court extends deadline for agreement in federal lawsuit over nuclear pit production \(which seeks to concentrate all pit production in New Mexico while allowing its acceleration\)](#) (10/26/2024)

Synopsis of this letter:

- If you live within driving distance of one or more of the upcoming hearings regarding the Draft [Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement \(SWEIS\) for Los Alamos National Laboratory \(LANL\)](#), we urge you to attend those meeting(s) **IN PERSON**, and get others to do so as well. Virtual attendance is much less valuable. Signs, banners, costumes, are all possible and welcome.
- We urge you to use these [hearings](#) in whatever way you can to publicly proclaim your resistance to producing any plutonium warhead cores ("pits") at LANL, and get your friends, and organizations you know, to do so as well. You can be as creative as you like. Sincerity and commitment count. It is our job to help amplify your voice. Help us help you.
- We must make these hearings serve us -- the public, tribes, and local and state governments -- not the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) or LANL. While we respect those who worked on the draft SWEIS, most of whom are doing the best they can, overall these hearings are not a good-faith exercise on NNSA's or LANL's part. In themselves, these hearings are a simulacrum of democracy, a show, not the real thing. Those who testify or send comments will not be heard by NNSA in any meaningful way; all the decisions have been made or will be made regardless of what is said by any of us. For us, these hearings are blank slates on which we all can write, empty stages where we can speak and enact the truths we see. They are occasions in which we can build solidarity and find fellowship as we pursue a very different agenda from LANL's: a life-affirming agenda for New Mexico and the United States. How would YOU express that? Tell us all, at the hearings!
- We want everyone to endorse the [Call for Sanity, Not Nuclear Production](#). Your endorsement helps build solidarity with the more than 1,000 individuals and 245 businesses and organizations currently on board.
- If you plan to testify using words, please send us your testimony in written form before, or at, or soon after the hearings and we will collect and post these testimonies on-line. We will also film the proceedings and make that footage available on our [YouTube channel](#).
- LANL pit production is far from a "done deal." Many years and billions of dollars of continued plutonium build-up lie ahead, if investment continues. It is a troubled program, with many strikes against it. We urge you to join us in building further opposition. See [What You Can Do](#). Pit production in the U.S. has already been postponed many years by public opposition, especially in New Mexico. New Mexicans have repeatedly stood up bravely and [successfully](#) against new nuclear weapons, by opposing the making of plutonium pits at LANL. Do not give in to counsels of acceptance and passivity. If pit production at LANL is normalized and accepted it could metastasize, despite all its problems. Other hazardous missions might come as well.

Dear friends --

As you probably read ("[Nuclear agency releases draft environmental impact statement for Los Alamos National Laboratory](#)," 1/9/25), the Department of Energy (DOE) and NNSA have released their [draft SWEIS for LANL](#).

We urge you to attend and testify at one or more of the upcoming hearings regarding this draft document.

### LANL Draft SWEIS hearing dates, times (all are in Mountain Time), and locations

- **Tuesday, February 11, 2025**, 1:00-4:00 pm (Virtual Meeting: 1:30-4:00 pm), Santa Fe Community Convention Center, Sweeney Ballroom, 201 W. Marcy St., Santa Fe, NM 87501 ([map](#))
- **Tuesday, February 11, 2025**, 5:00-8:00 pm (Virtual Meeting: 5:30-8:00 pm), Santa Fe Community Convention Center, Sweeney Ballroom
- **Wednesday, February 12, 2025**, 5:00-8:00 pm, Mision y Convento, 405 N. Paseo de Oñate, Española, NM 87532 ([map](#))
- **Thursday, February 13, 2025**, 5:00-8:00 pm, Fuller Lodge, 2312 Central Ave., Los Alamos, NM 87544 ([map](#))

The draft SWEIS is long and detailed. Some of us will read it carefully, but you can get a pretty good idea of what it says from the [Summary](#).

It has three "alternatives," a word we to which we would add quote marks. Quoting from NNSA, these are:

**The No-Action Alternative includes 87 new projects**, totaling almost 1.5 million square feet, that would be implemented between 2024 and 2038. **Also, under No-Action, NNSA would implement 11 projects involving facility upgrades, utilities, and infrastructure** affecting about 216 acres of the LANL site. About 1.6 million square feet of excess or aging facilities would undergo DD&D under the No-Action Alternative. The No-Action Alternative also

includes changes in operations, examples of which include increased plutonium pit production and the remediation of a chromium plume in Mortandad Canyon (which was the subject of a recent environmental assessment).

**The Modernized Operations Alternative includes the scope of the No-Action Alternative plus additional modernization activities, including (1) construction of replacement facilities; (2) upgrades to existing facilities, utilities, and infrastructure; and (3) DD&D projects. Under the Modernized Operations Alternative, NNSA would replace facilities that are approaching their end of life, upgrade facilities to extend their lifetimes, and improve work environments to enable NNSA to meet operational requirements. The Modernized Operations Alternative also includes proposed projects to reduce greenhouse gases and other emissions. **The Modernized Operations Alternative includes 139 new projects, totaling over 3.4 million square feet, that would be implemented between 2025 and 2038. Under Modernized Operations, NNSA would implement 27 projects involving facility upgrades, utilities, and infrastructure affecting about 925 acres of the LANL site.** Of these 925 acres, up to 795 acres are proposed for installation of up to 159 megawatts of solar photovoltaic arrays across the site. An additional 1.2 million square feet of excess or aging facilities would undergo DD&D under the Modernized Operations Alternative.**

**The Expanded Operations Alternative [the "Preferred Alternative"] includes the actions proposed under the Modernized Operations Alternative, plus actions that would expand operations and missions to respond to future national security challenges and meet increasing requirements. This alternative includes construction and operation of new facilities that would expand capabilities at LANL beyond those that currently exist. **The Expanded Operations Alternative includes 18 additional new projects, totaling about 947,000 square feet, that would be implemented between 2025 and 2038. Under Expanded Operations, NNSA would implement 4 additional projects involving utilities and infrastructure affecting about 46 acres of the LANL site.** Most of the utilities and infrastructure projects would be directly related to proposed projects under the Expanded Operations Alternative. The Expanded Operations Alternative also includes changes in operations, examples of which include revised wildland fire risk reduction treatments and management of feral cattle.**

**The simplest and best way to see these SWEIS "alternatives" is to understand that they aren't alternatives at all. By merely including all these projects in the SWEIS, NNSA will have done, by its lights, sufficient analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to go ahead with any or all of them.** Anything named in this SWEIS will be "covered" no matter which alternative is chosen in the first Record of Decision (ROD). If it turns out that the ROD omits a particular action named, all NNSA has to do is to issue an amended ROD (AROD) including that particular project. NNSA will then deem, as it has many times before, that no new analysis or consideration of alternatives is necessary.

To create this freedom of government action without any need for project-specific analysis of alternatives (the whole point of NEPA), all NNSA has to do is to get through these hearings and write a final SWEIS. They do not have to agree with any comments or engage with commenters in good faith. They just have to "consider" testimony and comments by putting them in a "comment response document" to protect themselves (more or less) from future litigation and amend the text of the SWEIS as needed to explain why they rejected this or that comment -- or perhaps accepted it in whole or in part, making some trivial correction.

Think of the drafting of this SWEIS as NNSA and LANL making a big list of projects and programs: current, planned, possible, and also certain "stalking horses" (like the proposed plutonium disposition facility, which could be anything big that handles tons of plutonium, creating a "plutonium-shaped" placeholder in NNSA's big NEPA tent). There are also "sweeteners" in their alternatives (e.g. the solar field with batteries -- not however sufficient to avoid the new power line through the Caja del Rio -- killing feral cattle, better fire mitigation).

To decipher this SWEIS and understand it holistically, reassemble the original list from the three seemingly-separate baskets. All three baskets are in the same delivery truck, heading our way. Everything comes with a NEPA "impact-back guarantee," allowing NNSA to exchange one or more projects and programs for others of equal or lesser impact if the first ones don't fit future "needs."

**The most important thing about this SWEIS is that it comes long after, rather than before, the Sept. 2, 2020 decision to add a pit factory to LANL. The present NEPA process is being staged to create a veneer of legitimacy for decisions taken prior to environmental analysis in direct violation of NEPA, and also to avoid proper NEPA analysis in the future. A completed SWEIS is a NEPA "get out of jail free" ticket.**

Enough for now; further discussion is coming in "Part II" next week. See you at the hearings!

Best wishes,

Greg

---

[^ back to top](#)

2901 Summit Place NE Albuquerque, NM 87106, Phone: 505-265-1200