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New Mexico at Risk from Expanded Bomb Production: Learn More on March 1st

On Saturday, March 1st at the Genoveva Chavez Community Center, a diverse range of organizations and community leaders are co-sponsoring an all-day forum spotlighting the threat to New Mexico's residents and natural resources posed by the Department of Energy's recent proposal for the "transformation" of its nuclear weapons complex.

At 10:00 AM, March 1st, **a press conference at same location will feature Mayor Joseph Maestas of Espanola, Governor Craig Quanchello of Picuris Pueblo, Allen Sanchez, Executive Director of the New Mexico Conference of Catholic Bishops, and Mayor David Coss of Santa Fe**, who recently passed a resolution with the City Council opposing expanding nuclear weapons production at the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL).

Event speakers include Robert H. Gilkeson, former lead consultant to LANL's Groundwater Protection Program, Joni Arends of Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety, Jay Coghlan of Nuclear Watch New Mexico, and many others. Attendees will have the opportunity to prepare written comments and/or film testimony to be submitted to the Department of Energy. For more information, please visit www.nuclearactive.org and www.nukewatch.org.

Under the Bush Administration's proposal for the future of the nuclear weapons complex, Los Alamos will remain the nation's only producer of plutonium pit "triggers" for nuclear warheads. However, that mission is to be expanded from 20 pits per year to up to 80. An even more extreme alternative under consideration calls for the production of up to 200 plutonium pits per year at LANL.

At the higher level of pit production, the Lab could increase airborne pollutants by 28%. Precious **natural resources would be stretched to the limit** as the Lab's current water rights would be exceeded by 10%. In the event of a facility accident at LANL, the chances of fatalities would also increase.

"These figures are shocking, but what's even more troubling is that New Mexico residents in the Rio Grande corridor are doubly affected by the combined hazards at both the Sandia and Los Alamos National Laboratories. The DOE has not looked at the cumulative environmental and public health impacts of the two facilities located within 60 miles of each other," said Joni Arends of Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety.

A Community Event to Protect Our Health, Children, and Water from the Nuclear Weapons Complex will take place Saturday, March 1st from 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM at the Genoveva Chavez Center, 3221 Rodeo Road in Santa Fe. Event sponsors include the City of Santa Fe, Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety, Faithful Security, the New Mexico Conference of Churches, and Nuclear Watch New Mexico.

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Event sponsors and speakers are available for interviews, including:

Joni Arends, Executive Director
Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety
jarends@nuclearactive.org; (505) 986-1973

Rev. Holly Beaumont, Legislative Advocate
New Mexico Conference of Churches
habeaumont@aol.com; 505-660-5018

Jay Coghlan, Executive Director
Nuclear Watch New Mexico
jay@nukewatch.org; 505-989-7342

To contact other speakers, please contact Jessica Wilbanks at 505-758-1206 or
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