

# **Presentation to the State of New Mexico Radioactive and Hazardous Waste Materials Committee**

**by Ralph Phelps, Chairman  
Northern New Mexico Citizens' Advisory Board  
July 19, 2012**

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[www.nnmcab.energy.gov](http://www.nnmcab.energy.gov)



# Northern New Mexico Citizens' Advisory Board (NNMCAB)

A U.S. Department of Energy  
Site-Specific Advisory Board (SSAB)  
Chartered under the Federal Advisory  
Committee Act (FACA)



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# What is the Site Specific Advisory Board?

The Site-Specific Advisory Board (SSAB) was developed to involve local citizens more directly in Department of Energy (DOE) Environmental Management (EM) Remediation decisions at major nuclear facilities in the U.S. Eight local site boards are currently active under the EM-SSAB charter. The SSAB has Citizen Advisory Boards at the following DOE Sites: Hanford, Idaho, Los Alamos, Nevada, Oak Ridge, Paducah, Portsmouth and Savannah River.

## What do the Local Site Boards do?

The local site boards provide the DOE with policy information, advice, and recommendations concerning environmental restoration, waste management, and technology development activities. They provide input and recommendations on difficult and sometimes controversial national and site specific issues such as future land use, risk assessment, waste management, clean-up levels, economic development, and budget prioritization activities. Since their inception, local site boards have helped establish public trust and confidence in the EM program and DOE.

## What are Local Site Boards Responsibilities?

- Providing consensus advice and recommendations to DOE on key EM issues which communicate the diversity of local citizen views in its discussions.
- Keeping the public informed on key issues, upcoming decisions, and board recommendations.

## DOE's obligations to the Local Site Boards include:

- Keeping the boards informed about key issues and upcoming decisions.
- Requesting recommendations well in advance of DOE deadlines.
- Considering and responding to all board recommendations.



## NNMCAB MISSION

Board responsibilities include providing advice and recommendations on DOE EM's programs:

- Environmental Restoration
- Waste Management
- Monitoring and Surveillance
- Community Outreach
- Future Land Use and Long-term Environmental Stewardship
- Associated Environmental Issues, including Risk Management and Budget Prioritization



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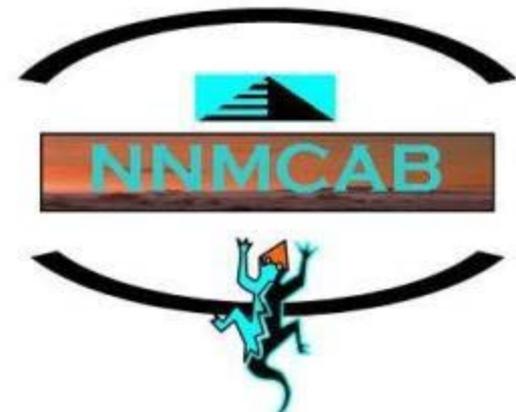
# Providing Two-way Communication to the CAB



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# Northern New Mexico Citizen's Advisory Board

The Northern New Mexico Citizens' Advisory Board (NNMCAB) is comprised of 20 residents of northern New Mexico, who are appointed to serve a two-year term. Board members represent specific stakeholder categories including: local governments; tribal governments; environmental, civic and religious groups; labor organizations; ethnic minorities; academia; women's groups and other interested individuals. The NNMCAB has a very diverse membership, with varied backgrounds and experiences including a medical doctor, a piano teacher and a retired law enforcement officer. The NNMCAB is also fortunate to have retired Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) employees and two Pueblo members, who offer a unique perspective on the impact of LANL operations on surrounding communities.



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# ***Advisory Boards Makes Valuable Contributions to EM***

- The eight local EM Site-Specific Advisory Boards (EM SSABs) provided 56 recommendations collectively in 2011
- The Boards have offered recommendations to EM sites around the DOE complex
- Recommendations champion public participation activities, emphasize safe disposal of contaminated material and, in some cases, yield significant taxpayer savings

# *Impact of Specific NNM CAB Recommendations*

## *“Well Installation Techniques”*

- Historically, some monitoring wells at LANL were installed with the use of drilling fluids
  - The drilling fluids were later shown to mask some contaminants, which could potentially impact the groundwater.
- The NNM CAB researched this topic at length and wrote several recommendations asking DOE to use an alternate drilling method, which would provide more reliable sampling results
  - The NNM CAB also provided recommendations for several techniques that would be an improvement over the historic drilling methods.
- The NNM CAB recommendations, in conjunction with review and approval from the New Mexico Environment Department, helped guide LANL to find alternate drilling methods, which provide more reliable data
  - Since approximately 2009, all new monitoring wells have been installed with either air rotary, auger, and/or casing advance using little or no drilling fluids or just water where required

# ***Impact of Specific NNM CAB Recommendations***

## ***“Accelerating TRU Waste Removal”***

- During 2011, the NNM CAB drafted and approved three Recommendations to DOE pertaining to the acceleration of the removal of TRU waste from Area G to the WIPP site in
  - One recommendation addressed meeting the Consent Order milestones
  - One recommendation addressed maximizing the utilization of WIPP by increasing TRU shipments to meet the EM Complex-wide goal of disposition of 90% of legacy TRU waste by the end of 2015
  - The third recommendation addressed the urgency of completely removing the TRU waste stored at Area G because of the threat of wildfire
- The NNM CAB called for the DOE to make completion of the removal of these drums the top environmental priority and provide the specific priority funding to LANL to allow shipments of the TRU waste from Area G to WIPP as soon as possible

## ***Impact of Specific NNM CAB Recommendations “Accelerating TRU Waste Removal”(Cont.)***

- As a consequence of the Los Conchas Fire, the NNM CAB Recommendations and the prioritization by New Mexico Governor Susana Martinez, DOE and the New Mexico Environment Department negotiated the Framework Agreement, which was presented to the public at a special NNM CAB meeting on Jan. 5<sup>th</sup>, 2012
- The Framework Agreement requires all legacy and newly generated TRU waste to be removed by no later than December 31, 2014

# *Impact of Specific NNM CAB Recommendations*

## *“Using Rail”*

- Until late 2009, all low-level waste from LANL was transported by truck
- In 2010 LANL began shipping via rail head through Antonito, Colorado
  - The community objected, raising concerns regarding safety and possible contamination
- The NNM CAB researched this problem in depth regarding risk measures related to the routing of hazmat by rail or truck and drafted and adopted Recommendation 2011-03
  - The NNM CAB noted that shipment by rail eased truck traffic on highways: one intermodal train could haul the same amount of LLW as approximately 280 trucks
  - Rail freight transportation incurs about 12 percent of the fatalities and 6 percent of the injuries that trucks do, per trillion ton-miles

# ***Impact of Specific NNM CAB Recommendations***

## ***“Using Rail” (Cont)***

- The NNM CAB drafted a recommendation supporting the continued use of rail with the caveat that DOE would consult with impacted local communities
  - To provide information and education about all aspects of the shipments
  - Receive concurrence of local communities before any shipments begin
- The NNM CAB later supported elevating this recommendation through the EM-SSAB at a national meeting, where it was adopted by several of the boards and was forwarded to EM-1 for consideration

# *Impact of Specific NNM CAB Recommendations*

## *“Budget”*

- The NNM CAB drafts a recommendation annually requesting that LANL be given the resources needed to meet Consent Order Compliance and make continued progress with TRU waste disposal (Most recently recommendations 2011-01 and 2012-01)
- These recommendations in conjunction with support from Governor Martinez and state legislators helped LANL get the highest marks from the House and Senate in years (\$219M and \$235M respectively)
  - Note that the full budget request was \$239M, which was requested by the President



NNMCAB is now in Pojoaque. The office's address is 94 Cities of Gold Road.

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## Questions

# ***Board Contact Information***

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