

February 23, 2026

James Kenney  
Secretary  
New Mexico Environment Department  
Harold Runnels Building  
1190 St. Francis Dr. Suite N4050  
Santa Fe, NM 87505

*RE: Recent NMED Fine of DOE and Environmental Cleanup Based on the County's Priorities*

We are writing to request that New Mexico Environment Department (“NMED”) prioritize the U.S. Department of Energy/National Nuclear Security Administration (“DOE”) cleanup based more closely to the Incorporated County of Los Alamos’ (“County”) priorities. All of the major DOE cleanup actions are located in the County. County involvement and knowledge of the issues is critical as we are the people most impacted by the decisions.

We are writing this letter based on NMED’s recent fines of DOE for cleanup actions at Los Alamos and NMED’s prioritization of MDA-C cleanup.

As we have stated to you, as the host to DOE’s operations and cleanup actions, we believe that DOE and NMED should provide significant deference to our community’s cleanup priorities which are created based on a vote of the elected leaders of the host municipality with significant community input. As we discussed with you, MDA-C is not the top priority for the County although it remains important to our community. The County’s 2026 top cleanup priorities, with the limited cleanup funding are:

- Restart IM to allow injection activities at previously acceptable locations. Ensure there is an acceptable mechanism to create a path forward for land application of treated water before stopping or reducing injection. Our understanding is land application is too limited and not currently permitted by the NM Office of the State Engineer.
- Accelerate the final remedy of the cleanup of the Chromium Plume and protect the PM-3 Drinking Water well.
- [please correct the list] Require EM to provide the County with the information required to make an informed decision regarding the on potential future conveyance of the remainder of TA-21 including the remainder of MDA-T.
- Rendija Canyon munitions and explosives of concern clearance which has been delayed for years.

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- Continue and accelerate shipping TRU waste from LANL to WIPP.

The cleanup of MDA-C should not take the priority of protection human health and safety of all of the cleanup priorities with DOE's limited budget at Los Alamos. We understand that the magnitude of the cleanup is approximately \$15 million for DOE's selected remedy versus \$800 million for NMED's proposed remedy. With a budget of approximately \$250 million per year, we want to understand how the cleanup of the County priorities can occur while the NMED priority is moved forward. For example, the impact to the County's drinking water well from the chromium plume is a large priority. NMED and County should try to learn of each other's priorities and collaborate with DOE to achieve these priorities.

Both of us want: (i) the cleanup to occur, (ii) increased DOE cleanup budgets and (iii) more TRU waste shipments moved to WIPP. However, all of the actions must first take into account the County's and our citizens cleanup priorities coupled the realities of the federal budget.

Working with WIPP to prioritize, Los Alamos WIPP shipments can be accomplished with higher budgets and an additional team from WIPP to process the TRU waste shipments at Los Alamos.

Finally, NMED's proposed fines must also be used to fund cleanup actions in the County. Any fines that DOE pays to the NMED would remove cleanup dollars from the cleanup program. As in the past (when NEMD fined WIPP), we want NMED to prioritize any collected fines to be used for cleanup in the County and not moved to the general funds of the State for non-cleanup issues. Any instance in doing so would operate at the antithesis of prioritization of environmental cleanup.

We would like to set up a meeting with you to discuss these requests and the County concerns regarding public health and safety in the County. If you have any questions, please contact \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_@lacnm.us.

Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to a continued productive conversation.

Sincerely,

Randall Ryti  
Council Chair

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