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Department of Energy
Finding of No Significant Impact
for the Proposed
Nonproliferation and International Security Center
at
Los Alamos National Laboratory,
Los Alamos, New Mexico

U. S. Department of Energy
Los Alamos Area Office
528 35th Street
Los Alamos, NM 87544

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

NONPROLIFERATION AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY CENTER

AT LOS ALAMOS NATIONAL LABORATORY, LOS ALAMOS, NEW MEXICO

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT: The Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Nonproliferation and International Security Center (the Center) at Los Alamos National Laboratory (DOE/EA-1238) (attached) provides sufficient evidence and analysis to determine that a Finding Of No Significant Impact is appropriate for this action. The EA documents the evidence and analysis in the following chapters: 1. Purpose and Need for Agency Action; 2. Description of Alternatives; and 3. Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences.

The *EA for the Proposed Construction and Operation of the Nonproliferation and International Security Center* analysis indicates that potential adverse effects of the proposed action under normal conditions would be minimal. Engineering and administrative controls and similar activities or considerations that serve to lessen any potential for adverse environmental effects, have been incorporated into the project description in Chapter 2.1 of the EA and are considered to be integral parts of the proposal vital to defining it. An example of this type of defining-project element is the use of engineering designs for the construction of the vault storage area and shielded calibration rooms that would provide for safe storage of sealed radioactive sources[1].

[1] Sealed sources contain radioactive material encapsulated in plastic or metal to prevent contact with and dispersion of the radioactive material under the conditions of use and wear for which they were designed and are used to calibrate gamma and neutron detectors (Health Physics Society 1997, PC 1999c).

The EA considered the type of potential accidents that might occur within the Nonproliferation and International Security Center through activities involving either process or activity use of hazardous chemicals or radioactive materials that could be associated with laboratories located at the Center. Additionally, the EA considered the cumulative potential for adverse accident-related affects relative to the Center's proximity to laboratory and test facilities constituting Los Alamos National Laboratory. The EA analysis indicates that potential adverse effects of the proposed action are associated only with severe and extremely unlikely accident conditions involving the LANL CMR Building. The most severe event, an unmitigated fire engulfing an entire wing of the CMR Building, is an extremely unlikely event that could result, under certain circumstances, in adverse effects to personnel at the Nonproliferation and International Security Center. The modeling analysis used many very conservative assumptions such that this result is not judged to be significant given the probability of the event.

PREDECISIONAL DRAFT REVIEW & COMMENT: On June 18, 1999, the Department of Energy invited review and comment on the predecisional EA from the State of New Mexico; four nearby American Indian Tribes: Cochiti, Jemez, Santa Clara and San Ildefonso (sometimes referred to as the four accord pueblos because each tribe has entered into an accord with the Department of Energy); and the Mescalero Apache Tribe. In addition, the Department of Energy made the predecisional draft EA available to Los Alamos County and the general public at the same time it was provided to the State and Tribes by placing it in the Department of Energy Public Reading Rooms within the Los Alamos National Laboratory's Community Outreach Center and Reading Room in Los Alamos, and the University of New Mexico's Zimmerman Library in Albuquerque. The predecisional draft EA was also placed on the World Wide Web Computer Internet System. Additionally, over 30

local stakeholder groups, which have identified themselves as interested parties with regards to LANL activities, were notified of the availability of the predecisional draft on June 18, 1999, and copies of the EA were provided to all interested parties for their review upon their requests. No comments were received from any party on the predecisional draft EA.

AGENCY CONSULTATIONS: Construction within an already developed area of LANL's Technical Area -3 is being proposed. Construction will take place upon an existing paved area. No potential effects to area habitat for Federally-listed Threatened and Endangered Species are anticipated during construction actions or operation of the facility; similarly, no effects to individuals of Federally protected species are anticipated either. Therefore, no agency consultation was conducted with regards to compliance requirements under the Endangered Species Act. Similarly, there are no known nearby historical, prehistorical or other cultural resources that may be affected with regards to the construction or operation of the proposed facility. Therefore, the State Historical Preservation Officer has concurred on the DOE's determination that there are no anticipated effects to historic or prehistoric cultural resources; this concurrence completed the DOE's compliance requirements under the National Historic Preservation Act. No other agency consultations were identified as being required for the preparation of the EA with regards to compliance with environmental laws.

FINDING: The United States Department of Energy finds that there would be no significant impact from proceeding with its proposal to construct and operate the Nonproliferation and International Security Center at Technical Area 3 of Los Alamos National Laboratory for use as a office and laboratory facility. This finding is based on the EA that analyzes the consequences of the relevant issues of environmental concern. The Department of Energy

makes this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 [42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.], the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act [40 CFR 1500] and the Department of Energy National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Procedures [10 CFR 1021]. Therefore, no environmental impact statement is required for this proposal.

Signed in Los Alamos, New Mexico this 22nd day of July, 1999.

David A. Gurulé

David A. Gurulé, P.E.
Area Manager
Los Alamos Area Office

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: For further information on this proposal, this Finding Of No Significant Impact (FONSI), or the Department of Energy's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review program concerning proposals at Los Alamos National Laboratory, please contact:

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Copies of this FONSI (with the Environmental Assessment attached) will be made available for public review at the DOE Public Reading Room within the Los Alamos National Laboratory Community Relations Office, 1619 Central Avenue, Los Alamos, New Mexico, 87544 at (505) 665-4400 or (800) 508-4400. Copies will also be made available within the DOE Public Reading Room at the Zimmerman Library, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 87131 at (505) 277-5441.