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Department of Energy
National Nuclear Security Administration
Finding of No Significant Impact
for the
Proposed Construction and Operation of a
New Interagency Emergency Operations Center
at
Los Alamos National Laboratory,
Los Alamos, New Mexico

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

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY,
NATIONAL NUCLEAR SECUIRTY ADMINISTRATION
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Construction and Operation of a New Interagency Emergency Operations Center at Los Alamos National Laboratory, Los Alamos, New Mexico

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT: The *Environmental Assessment (EA) for The Proposed Construction and Operation of a New Interagency Emergency Operations Center at Los Alamos National Laboratory, Los Alamos, New Mexico (DOE/EA-1376)* (attached) provides sufficient evidence and analysis to determine that a Finding Of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is appropriate for the Proposed Action. The EA documents the evidence and analysis in the following chapters: 1. Purpose and Need for Agency Action; 2. Description of the Proposed Action and Alternatives; and, 3. Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences. Analyses performed in the EA conclude that potential adverse effects of the Proposed Action, under normal conditions, would be minimal. No short-term or long-term adverse effects are expected to occur to traffic flow, air quality, visual resources, sensitive biological and cultural resources, water quality, soil erosion, waste management, human health, socioeconomics, or utilities and infrastructure. Engineering and administrative controls or considerations that serve to lessen any potential for adverse environmental effects have been incorporated as integral features of the Proposed Action. Examples of these types of features include; the use of building materials produced from reclaimed and recycled materials (such as finish materials and carpeting), the use of low-flow lavatory fixtures and energy-efficient lighting fixtures and equipment to minimize water and electricity consumption; the use of reused and recycled materials in landscaping, along with captured precipitation and the planting of native species; and the painting of the water tower, which could be as high as about 150 feet above ground level, to visually blend in with its surroundings.

The Environmental Assessment (EA) has analyzed the potential environmental consequences of one additional alternative besides the Proposed Action, namely, the No Action alternative. The No Action alternative would result in continued use

of the existing Emergency Operations Center at LANL. This facility is located in the basement of Building 59-1 and can reasonably facilitate a staff of 16 persons in the event of an emergency action.

The EA considered the cumulative effects of the Proposed Action with past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions, regardless of what agency or person undertakes them. Although a shift in employees from TA-59 (existing EOC) to TA-69 (new Center) would occur with the implementation of the Proposed Action, no major traffic problems are anticipated as the TA-69 area is largely undeveloped and is likely to remain so within the foreseeable future. The overall visual quality within TA-69 would change slightly with the introduction of the Center. Although the Center's associated structures would be tall enough to be visible from the Los Alamos townsite and surrounding higher elevational areas within the nearby forest, the structures would be designed and painted so as to blend in with the general area as much as possible. From the townsite vantage point, the tower and possibly the fire suppression water storage tank would be seen against the backdrop of higher hillside trees and rocks, which would help to diminish the visual effect from that viewing location. Lighting in the parking lot would be a minor contribution to the overall light pollution of Los Alamos County, but would be directed downward and away from nearby forested habitat areas. Noise during construction would be mostly heard by the involved workers as it would be heard mostly within the nearby TA-69 area itself. After construction is completed there should be negligible noise associated with the operation of the facility. Several new office and laboratory structures are being built at LANL, mostly within TA-3, but due to the natural attenuation of sound across the mesas and canyons these should not cumulatively result in significant adverse noise issues. A cumulative beneficial effect to worker health is expected from the construction activities across LANL as the new buildings will be constructed to the more stringent current federal, state and local codes and regulations. Also, the new Center would have a cumulative beneficial human health effect to emergency response workers over the Pajarito Plateau that elect to use it as it will be the most modern state-of-the-art facility around. Other activities expected to occur nearby to TA-69 over the next 10 years include: potential construction actions taken by the Incorporated County of Los Alamos on tracts of land conveyed to them by the DOE; reconstruction of housing units lost during the May 2000 Cerro Grande Fire within Los Alamos townsite on privately held lands; the implementation of wildfire hazard reduction activities, including forest thinning actions, over LANL and

neighboring properties; some varied construction and demolition actions scattered over LANL, especially at TA-3 and in that general area; the generation of large amounts of waste by LANL through decontamination and demolition of buildings and environmental restoration efforts; and the gradual demolition of structures and buildings of the Cold War period at LANL and nearby.

PREDECISIONAL DRAFT REVIEW & COMMENT: On June 29, 2001, the Department of Energy invited review and comment on the predecisional draft 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); the Acoma Pueblo and the Mescalero Apache Tribe. In addition, the Department of Energy made the predecisional draft EA available to the general public at the same time it was provided to the State and Tribes. The availability of the EA to the public was accomplished by placing it in the Department of Energy Public Reading Rooms located within the Los Alamos National Laboratory's Community Outreach Center and Reading Room, and in the University of New Mexico's Zimmerman Library in Albuquerque. A notice was placed in three local newspapers announcing the availability of the draft EA for review. The predecisional draft EA was also placed on the World Wide Web Computer Internet System. Additionally, over 50 local stakeholder groups and individuals that have identified themselves as interested parties with regards to LANL activities, were notified by letter of the availability of the predecisional draft EA. Copies of the EA were provided to all interested parties for their review upon their requests. The review and comment period was 21 days long and ended on July 19, 2000. No comments have been received on the predecisional draft EA.

AGENCY CONSULTATIONS: No effects to Federally-listed threatened and endangered species or their habitat are anticipated during the implementation of the Proposed Action and, therefore, DOE is not required to engage in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service according to section 7 requirements under the Endangered Species Act. DOE implemented a Threatened and Endangered Species Habitat Management Plan (HMP) for LANL in March 1999 that was concurred upon under the section 7 requirements by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; all project portions implemented under the Proposed Action would comply with the HMP. No adverse effect to any cultural sites is anticipated as a result of implementing the

Proposed Action. There is a nearby cultural site to the Center's identified site that, together with a buffering area, would be fenced off and avoided during construction activities in order to protect the site from damage. DOE and the New Mexico State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) have entered into a Programmatic Memorandum of Understanding (MOU DE-GM32-00AI77152) concerning the management of undertakings that have no direct or indirect effects to cultural sites due to avoidance measures that satisfies NNSA's requirements for consultation with the SHPO for the Proposed Action under section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Therefore, DOE did not consult with the SHPO about the Proposed Action.

FINDING: The United States Department of Energy, National Nuclear Security Administration finds that there would be no significant impact from proceeding with its proposal to implement the project to construct and operate a new Interagency Emergency Operations Center at LANL's TA-69. This finding is based on the EA, which analyzes the consequences of the relevant issues of environmental concern. The Department of Energy, National Nuclear Security Administration makes this Finding of No Significant Impact 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 26 day of July 2001, 2001.

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.