

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

October 1, 2020

Mr. Michael J. Weis
Manager, Los Alamos Field Office
National Nuclear Security Administration
3747 West Jemez Road
Los Alamos, NM 87544

Dear Mr. Weis:

We write in response to concerns we are hearing from local communities and Pueblos regarding NNSA's planned processing of four flanged tritium waste containers to meet Department of Transportation requirements for safe off-site disposal. To help ensure the public is fully informed on NNSA's plan to release radioactive tritium at Los Alamos National Laboratory, we respectfully urge you to schedule an open public information meeting well in advance of the processing of the four waste containers and any associated venting of tritium.

We strongly believe that protecting public health and safety must always be the highest priority at Los Alamos. Safety is particularly important when there is a possibility of a release to the environment involving radioactive or hazardous materials. In the case of the planned processing and venting of tritium from legacy waste containers, we believe the public should be fully informed about the plans and schedules for the processing and have an opportunity to ask questions. In addition, a public information meeting should include the NNSA's justification for the planned approach for processing the containers, the efficacy of the methods used to trap the vented tritium to limit any release, how any release of tritium will be monitored in real time, the maximum amounts of tritium to be released to the environment, the specific regulatory roles of EPA and NMED and the NNSA's plans to assure oversight by the resident inspectors of the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board.

Because full transparency in NNSA's plans is essential to ensuring public confidence, we strongly urge you to hold an open public information meeting for the local communities and Pueblos in Northern New Mexico before moving forward with any venting of the flanged tritium waste containers. Given the nature of this issue and importance of ensuring public health and safety, we understand that a virtual meeting may be necessary at this time. However, due to difficulty accessing the internet and lack of broadband in many communities in New Mexico, it is critical that NNSA also provide targeted outreach by phone to all impacted communities and Pueblos in Northern New Mexico. This will allow the broad opportunity for active participation, awareness, and engagement that something of this importance necessitates. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

/s/ Tom Udall
TOM UDALL
United States Senator

/s/ Martin Heinrich
MARTIN HEINRICH
United States Senator

/s/ Ben Ray Luján
BEN RAY LUJÁN
Member of Congress