

Community Guide to the Draft Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement for Livermore Lab



Prepared by Tri-Valley CAREs
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Background

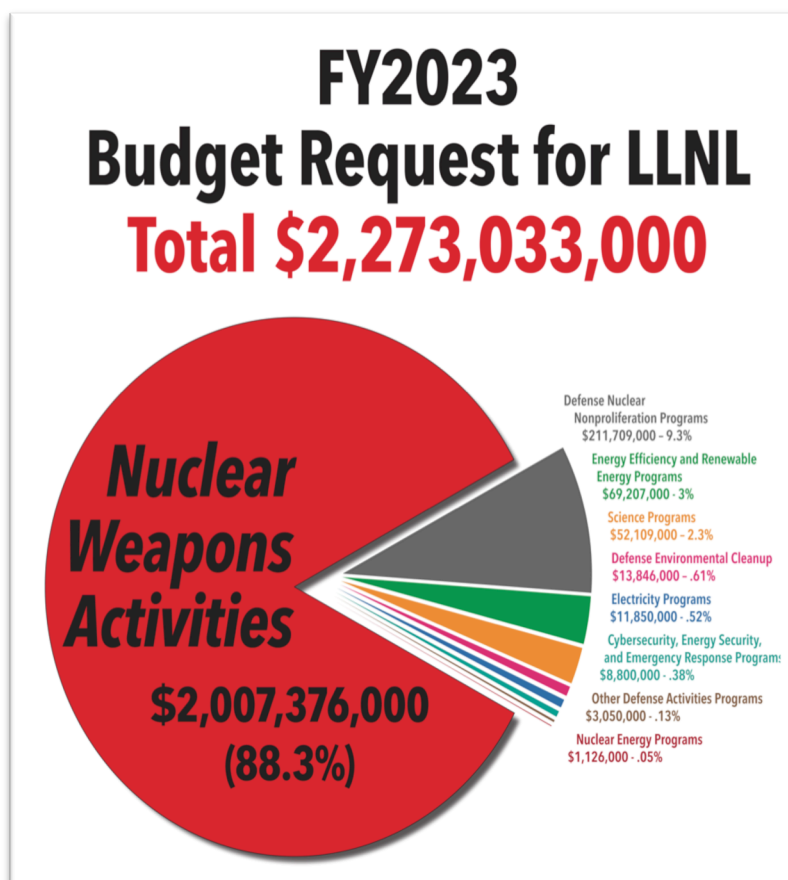
Livermore Lab

Founded in 1952, Livermore Lab is one of two locations that have designed every nuclear weapon in the U.S. arsenal. (The other being Los Alamos National Laboratory in NM). This work occurs mainly at Livermore Lab's Main Site – A one-square mile campus on edge of town with roughly six hundred buildings in high density where the “Superblock” facility (which houses quantities of “Special Nuclear Material” like plutonium) is located just a couple hundred yards from the fence line. Across from the fence in three directions are suburban neighborhoods, parks, vineyards, and office parks. Sandia, Livermore sits on its southern border. More than 90,000 people live in Livermore and nearly 8 million live in the 50-mile radius of the Lab, which it acknowledges could be in the affected area if there were a major accident on site. Roughly 9,000 employees work at the Main Site.

In addition, Livermore Lab operates the Site 300 High Explosives Testing Range in the foothills near Tracy, California, a short drive from Livermore. Open-air high explosives tests to support the nuclear weapons development occurring at the Main Site are detonated at Site 300 on a regular basis. The Lab is seeking to increase the strength of the blasts it is allowed to conduct at Site 300, despite the ever-encroaching suburban development near the site.

Work at the Lab's Main Site and Site 300 has resulted in toxic and radioactive releases and contamination to workers and the environment, i.e. the air, water and the land on and around the sites. Specifically, contamination from both sites have polluted the groundwater underneath to the extent that the sites were both listed as a “Superfund” cleanup sites by the US EPA. Cleanup of contaminated soil and groundwater is ongoing at both sites and expected to take generations to complete, until 2080 in some areas.

More than 88% of the Lab's requested budget for fiscal year 2023, totaling more than \$2 billion, is earmarked for “Nuclear Weapons Activities”.



Tri-Valley CAREs (Communities Against a Radioactive Environment)

Tri-Valley CAREs works to strengthen global security by stopping the development of new nuclear weapons in the US and promoting the elimination of nuclear weapons globally. Nuclear weapons decrease rather than increase human security. Nuclear weapons pose one of the great social, economic and ecological challenges of our time.

Tri-Valley CAREs is a non-profit organization founded in 1983 in Livermore, California by concerned neighbors living around the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, one of two locations where all US nuclear weapons are designed. Tri-Valley CAREs monitors nuclear weapons and environmental cleanup activities throughout the US nuclear weapons complex, with a special focus on Livermore Lab and the surrounding communities.

Tri-Valley CAREs is the only organization that focuses its research, public education and advocacy on the potential environmental, health, and proliferation impacts of the Livermore Lab. Our membership has swelled to over 6,000, mostly in the Bay Area and Central Valley, with many around the country and beyond. Tri-Valley CAREs website (www.trivalleycares.org) is a resource for interested individuals and stakeholders locally and globally.

Tri-Valley CAREs works to end all further nuclear weapons development, testing and production as an important step toward their global elimination. Tri-Valley CAREs' seeks to move Livermore Lab in a new direction to better meet present day priorities for clean, renewable energy and nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament. The organization advocates transitioning Livermore Lab from nuclear weapons development to an unclassified "World Class Center for Civilian Science." Our efforts have resulted in the cancellation of nuclear weapons systems and in winning improvements in the Superfund cleanup program (to cite just two examples) but there is much yet to be done.

Tri-Valley CAREs has received numerous Technical Assistance Grants from the US EPA Region 9 to serve as independent community monitor. We analyze the cleanup of toxic and radioactive contamination at the Main Site and Site 300. Our monitoring of these cleanups is ongoing despite the fact that Lab operations continue to impact and exacerbate the underlying pollution and the cleanup. The organization also advocates with stakeholders to keep the cleanup on schedule and fully funded.

Tri-Valley CAREs has been involved in every SWEIS process for LLNL since 1983 (not to mention many other environmental review processes at the Lab). The organization has mobilized hundreds of concerned citizens to voice opinions and opposition at public hearings and via written comment to some potentially dangerous future plans that were identified by previous SWEIS documents. Together, this activism has impacted the final decisions and stopped or limited risky activities at the Lab. Undoubtedly, this work has resulted in fewer toxic releases from Livermore Lab, fewer worker exposures, and a healthier environment for the community.

We hope you join us in advocating during the public participation process of this 2002 draft SWEIS to fight for the changes that will protect the environment, enhance nuclear nonproliferation and lower the risk posed by the development of nuclear weapons in our backyard.



The Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement (SWEIS) Process

On August 5, 2020, the United States National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) published a Federal Register Notice of Intent to prepare a new Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL) Site Wide Environmental Impact Statement (SWEIS).

This document will be prepared to comply with the agency's guidance for implementing the requirements of the federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) that requires all federal agencies, including the Department of Energy (DOE) and NNSA to analyze the environmental impacts of agency actions.

A large federal weapons lab like Livermore Lab is taking ongoing action that could affect the environment, and thus it undergoes a periodic full site-wide review. The first Lab SWEIS in which Tri-Valley CAREs participated reached its record of decision in 1992. The process was again undertaken in and reached a record of decision in 2005. This will be the third SWEIS.

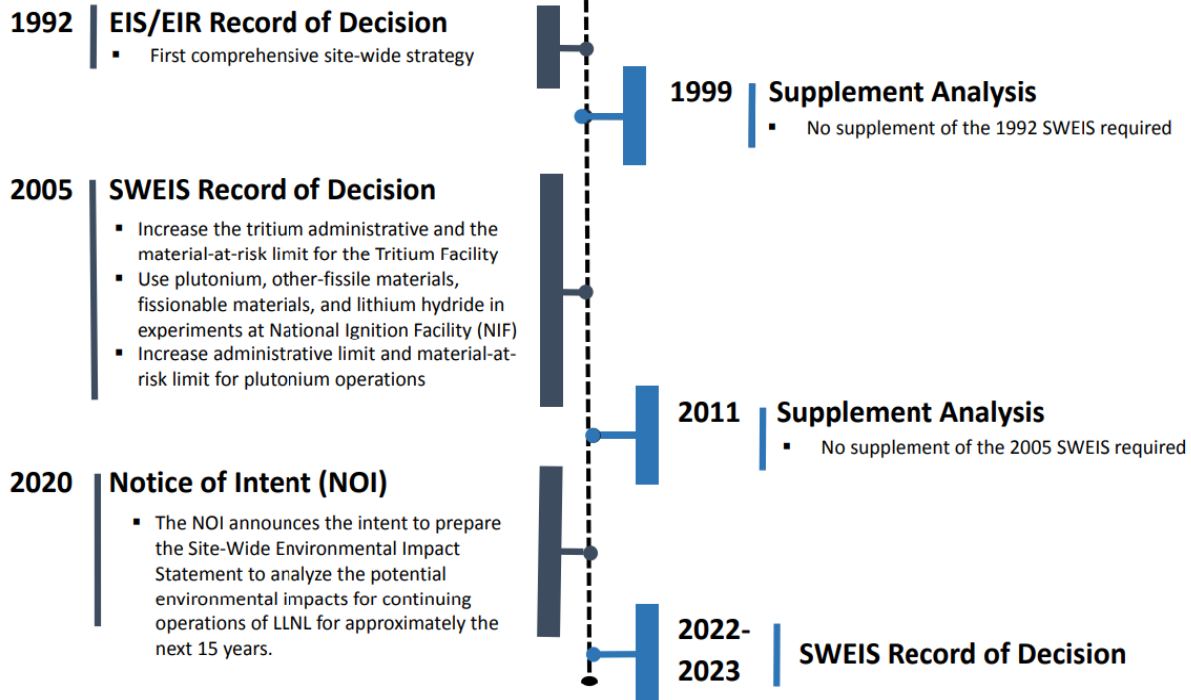
The Notice of Intent (NOI) states that this new SWEIS will “analyze the potential environmental impacts for continuing operations of LLNL for approximately the next 15 years.”

Following the NOI, the Lab conducted a “Scoping” period for the SWEIS, which included a document that summarized what they plan to include in the Draft SWEIS. Scoping included a public hearing and written public comment period conducted in October of 2020. Pursuant to the National Environmental

Policy Act the purpose of scoping is: “early identification of concerns, potential impacts, relevant effects of past actions and possible alternative actions.”



SWEIS Historical Context



Tri- Valley CAREs activated hundreds of community members to submit written comment and submitted extensive technical comments on behalf of its membership. All written and oral comments made during the “scoping process” are required to be responded to in the draft version of the SWEIS.

What to look for in the Draft SWEIS

NNSA has pushed off the release of the Draft SWEIS several times since the scoping period ended. It has most recently communicated that the Draft should be released in October 2022. When released, the draft document will likely contain multiple volumes, be many hundreds of pages long, and contain very technical charts, appendices and analyses that are often difficult for members of the public to digest and understand. This is a main reason Tri-Valley CAREs has prepared this community guide.

In the following section, we hope to provide community members and other stakeholders with a guide to what we think will be the most relevant parts of the Draft SWEIS to review in order to prepare a written public comment or make an oral statement at the yet to be announced public hearing(s).

Public participation in the SWEIS process is essential as it is the opportunity for member of the public and other stakeholders to have input into the operations of the Lab for the next 15 years. These comments go on the record and must be responded to by the Agency in the final version of the SWEIS.

If any party decides to file litigation under the Administrative Procedures Act alleging that the National Environmental Policy Act's requirements were not met by the SWEIS, they are limited to bringing up issues that were raised in some public comment.

The agency will seek to respond to the comments on the Draft SWEIS in a "Responses to Comments" document that it attaches as an addendum to the Final SWEIS. However, commenters can state in response to the Draft that they believe the Draft is inadequate and should be revised and re-released as another Draft so that there can be another round of public comment.

- Alternatives Analysis

NEPA requires that agencies include an analysis of reasonable alternatives to the proposed action. During the scoping for the SWEIS, the agency limited its examination of alternatives to a discussion of more limited operations of the Lab than proposed, but did not examine an alternative future for Livermore Lab; one in which the Lab does more unclassified, civilian science work and less work on developing new and modified nuclear warheads. The Federal Register Notice, posted in the NNSA reading room, states that this SWEIS will guide activities at Livermore Lab for the next 15-years or more. It is therefore a responsibility of the agency to fully analyze environmental impacts of the reasonable alternative of it transforming into a civilian science research facility so that those impacts can be compared to the impacts of the nuclear weapons activities in the proposed action. Decision makers and the public alike would benefit from having these facts in hand when making decisions.

This examination of civilian science based, alternative missions for Livermore Lab could include minimizing and preventing infectious disease pandemics, climate change adaptation and amelioration technologies, expanded nuclear non-proliferation, environmental cleanup technologies, alternative fuels, clean energy technologies, battery development, energy-grid efficiency, green building technologies, and other science areas to deal with the many challenges facing the United States and the world in the 21st century. In Tri-Valley CAREs view these technologies should be developed with public involvement and the health of the environment in mind.

When reviewing the Draft SWEIS, commenters should closely look at the Alternatives Analysis section to determine if this or other real alternatives were examined, and if not (which is likely) the commenters should suggest other alternatives in their comments.

- New Facilities and Old Facilities

The NNSA "Scoping Meeting" slides on the SWEIS posted in the agency's reading room state that the document will include "*Approximately 55 new facility construction projects...*" When reviewing the Draft SWEIS, commenters should look for details of the newly proposed construction projects. The SWEIS should be clear about which new facilities will be used for nuclear weapons research and development and which ones will not. If it is not clear, commenters should ask for more information about the newly proposed buildings.

Commenters should also review the Draft's description of its planned "Deconstruction and Decommissioning" of old buildings, especially those that have been identified as posing a potentially high risk to the public and to workers, to ensure that a reasonable schedule is being put forth. The

Federal Register Notice states that “Over the 15-year LLNL SWEIS planning horizon, NNSA has identified more than 110 excess facilities, totaling more than 1.1 million square feet, to be decontaminated, decommissioned, and demolished.” It is assumed that this includes the “High-Risk Excess Facilities” previously identified by the Department of Energy Inspector General, but also many more facilities that pose a risk to workers and the public.

The Draft SWEIS should clearly prioritize this D&D work, the expected time horizon for accomplishing the planned work, and how the buildings will be maintained in the meantime. The Lab should not preferentially build new facilities at the expense of dealing with its old mess.

- Ongoing Cleanup

The Livermore Lab Main Site was placed on the Environmental Protection Agency’s Superfund list of most contaminates sites in the nation in 1987. The Livermore Lab Site 300 high explosives testing range was placed on the EPA Superfund list in 1990. Both locations have multiple chemical and radioactive contaminants that have leaked into soils and groundwater aquifers, as well as some surface waters at Site 300. Both sites have contaminants that have moved off-site in “plumes.”



On-site and off-site contamination alike is being cleaned up under the Superfund law. Both locations have cleanup activities that will need to continue for the next 40 years or more. This past contamination must be fully considered in the Draft SWEIS. Additionally, the Draft SWEIS must state whether any program activities considered in the document will complicate or delay any of the Superfund monitoring or cleanup underway. Commenters should examine the Draft’s section on cleanup to ensure milestones on the ongoing cleanup are not being

altered or delayed. If the document is unclear about cleanup schedules over the next 15 years, commenters should point out the lack of clarity. Part of the legal requirement of a SWEIS is that it make the impacts clear to the public.

Note: Tri-Valley CAREs used the California Public Records Act to obtain this photograph from the California State Health Department files in the mid-1980s. At that time, the Lab had scores of hazardous waste drums like these (from Bldg. 231) with no content identification labels, out in the open, on porous asphalt, and leaking (see bottom of photo). These hazardous waste practices, along with many accidents, spills and additional leaks, led to soil and groundwater contamination that is still being cleaned up under the Superfund law. The Lab estimates it will take continuous action until 2060 and beyond to complete the cleanup.

- Worker Health and Safety

More than 2,000 current and former Livermore Lab employees have applied through the U.S. Department of Labor's Energy Employee Occupational Illness Compensation Program for compensation due to serious illnesses, including cancer, believed to have been caused by on-the-job exposures to radioactive and toxic materials at the Lab. The Draft SWEIS must consider worker health and safety in all of its analyses. Further, the document must consider past worker exposures when contemplating further operations with these potentially deadly materials. If the Draft does not examine worker impacts in sections where commenters believe it should, it should be noted in your comments.

- Raising Tritium Limits

Livermore Lab has a long history of working with Tritium (radioactive hydrogen) in its nuclear weapons development work. This work has resulted in major releases of Tritium into the environment over the years. The "Scoping Meeting" slides on the SWEIS contained the following statement: *"Operational changes – Changes to tritium emissions limits and Administrative Limit for plutonium and accident scenarios."* The agency noted in particular that the Draft SWEIS would seek to raise the emission limit for tritium. The Draft SWEIS should not be used only to justify increasing any radioactive emissions. Commenters should determine if the Draft SWEIS analyzed an alternative in which Livermore Lab's operations with radioactive materials are reduced or curtailed, and if not, request that it does. Commenters should feel free to advocate that the emission (release) limits for all hazardous materials be reduced, not increased.

- Raising Plutonium or Highly Enriched Uranium Limits

Livermore Lab also has a long history of working with Special Nuclear Material, especially plutonium and highly enriched uranium. The Federal Register Notice for preparation of the SWEIS states that expected operational changes at Livermore Lab include: *"Changes to material at risk (MAR), administrative limits, and radiological bounding accident scenarios as a result of the de-inventory of Security Category I and II special nuclear materials from LLNL, which was completed in 2012."* Weapons-usable quantities of plutonium and highly enriched uranium were the specific materials removed in bulk quantities at that time. The Draft must include an explicit analysis of the potential impacts of any changes to the limits instituted when these materials were removed. And commenters should review that analysis to ensure it is robust. Commenters should also determine if an alternative was analyzed that does not include the changes to the limits.

- Plutonium Pit Production Support Work

The National Nuclear Security Administration has testified to Congress that its number one priority is to expand plutonium pit (bomb core) production. The rationale and timing for expanded pit production is driven by the "needs" of the W87-1 warhead under development at Livermore Lab. The production sites will be at the Savannah River Site in SC and the Los Alamos Lab in NM. That said, the environmental review document for pit production at Los Alamos contains a chart that shows that site shipping plutonium from New Mexico to Livermore Lab for "material testing." The Draft SWEIS should clearly describe all of the planned plutonium pit support work to be done at Livermore Lab.



Commenters should look for descriptions of how whether the plan to use Livermore Lab for “materials testing” of plutonium will affect the changes being considered for Material at Risk (MAR) and administrative limits in the Draft SWEIS. In the past, Livermore Lab officials have said they might declare “variances” to Livermore Lab’s plutonium limits to accomplish testing of bomb cores coming from Los Alamos. Commenters should determine if the Draft SWEIS claims that Livermore Lab will use “variances” for “materials testing” of plutonium for pit production or some other administrative change.

The Draft SWEIS needs to detail all potential impacts of Livermore undertaking “materials testing” of plutonium and explain in detail how this activity does or does not comply with the aforementioned MAR and administrative limits, as well as the security limits imposed following the Lab’s failed force-on-force drill that led to the de-inventory. Again, an alternative should be analyzed in the Draft SWEIS in which Livermore does not undertake “materials testing” of plutonium in support of pit production.

Note: This government file photograph shows a worker handling a plutonium metal disk in a glovebox. Individual glove boxes are often configured into huge “glovebox lines” inside a facility. Historically Livermore Lab has had numerous glovebox accidents in the plutonium facility (as well as in its tritium facility). Currently, there is funding in the federal budget for Livermore Lab to purchase additional glove boxes specifically to support its role in expanded plutonium pit production. Commenters should expect to see detailed information about the plutonium operations to be performed in Livermore Lab glove boxes in the Draft SWEIS, and should be prepared to ask questions about it.

- Site 300 Bomb Blasts

Livermore Lab has separately analyzed a plan to increase the size and weight of open-air bomb blasts at Site 300 by as much as ten-fold per each blast and more than 7-fold annually. These planned high explosives detonations involve more than 100 chemically hazardous contaminants. A future alternative that foregoes these outdoor detonations with hazardous materials at Site 300 must be analyzed in the SWEIS.

It is notable that a September 9, 2020 U.S. Department of Energy’s Inspector General [DOE IG] Inspection Report on “The Department of Energy’s Management of Explosive Materials at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory” disclosed that serious **problems persist** in the Lab’s management of

dangerous high explosives. First, the inspectors discovered multiple ways in which Livermore Lab ignores required regulations governing the management of these high-risk substances.

For example the report notes that, “We interviewed eight officials responsible for explosives management at HEAF [High Explosives Application Facility] and Site 300, and upon our request none provided us with detailed inventory procedures.” So these officials acknowledged that the Lab is not following any particular set of regulations. The report goes on the note that in fact there are eight different high explosives management systems being used between the Lab’s Site 300 high explosives testing range and the Main Site, where HEAF is located.

Additionally, the inspectors found that the “custodians” of the high explosives were doing their own inventorying of the materials in violation of the requirement that explicitly states, “Physical inventories shall be performed by the use of personnel other than the custodians of the property.” These regulations are in place to create efficiency and prevent this material from going missing. The inspectors found several inventory errors that resulted from these various management systems and could lead to a loss (or theft) of explosive material.

Also alarming were the physical problems with high explosives storage that the inspectors found on site. For example, the report says that “we observed two damaged storage containers, one having a broken handle, and the other partially damaged, unsealed, and infested with insects.” The report notes that the Lab was not following its own protocols for pest abatement. “In response to our observations, LLNL officials immediately replaced the insect-infested container with an approved onsite container.”

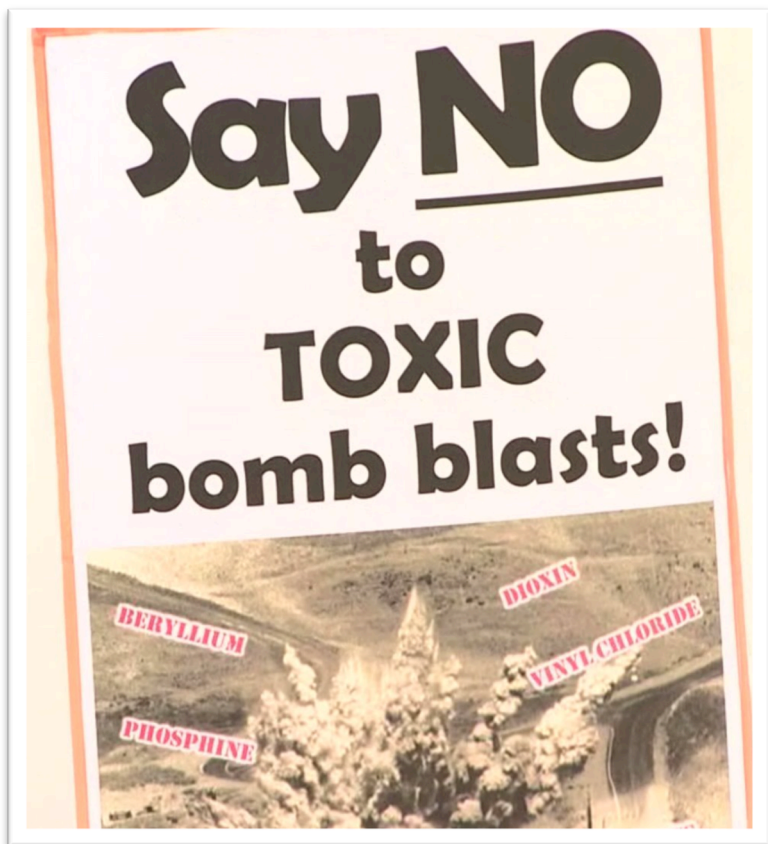
In addition the DOE IG report, “observed that some of LLNL’s explosives storage facilities showed signs of physical deterioration at Site 300. For example, 14 storage facilities at Site 300 had peeling interior paint, and another had a severe mice infestation that prevented us from entering the magazine until it was decontaminated. The mice-infested magazine also had wide gaps around the doorway, which may have been a contributing factor to rodent infestation. As previously mentioned, we also identified an insect infestation inside an explosives container stored within a magazine at Site 300.” Despite the Lab’s \$2 billion dollar per year budget, they are unable to prevent rodents from entering buildings housing High Explosives. This underscores that Lab continues to prioritize new warhead development over site maintenance and safety.

Finally, an enduring problem, given the Lab’s rapid expansion and ramping up of nuclear weapons work, is that it is running out of space to house High Explosives. The report notes that “During our inspection, we identified older and legacy materials that programs do not plan to use in the future. Officials stated that physical storage space is crowded and one official stated that more storage space may be necessary for new work on life extension programs.”

“In response to the limited availability of space, Lab officials stated that they do not have a formal plan to manage the space in the future, but actively attempt to mitigate the situation through the disposition of older material and the use of the older material in training and cleaning shots. However, there are a number of limitations that slow the disposition and use of older material.

Due to California air quality restrictions, Site 300 is only permitted to expend 1,000 pounds of explosives each year in the open air and must follow specific guidance based on environmental

concerns. An official stated that Livermore Lab shipped some explosives off-site for disposition in the past 2 years, but due to security concerns there are limitations for the remaining materials. If the Lab “continues to work on [warhead] life extension programs in the near future, then it is necessary that the explosive managers actively manage the stockpile now to provide room for future material,” he said according to the DOE IG report.



Tri-Valley CAREs objects to the ever increasing amount of High Explosives stored and used in experiments at Livermore Lab’s Main Site and Site 300 and believes it is essential for the Draft SWEIS to evaluate the risks posed by an accident or intentional act due to this material being housed in such close proximity to workers and the public.

Additionally, the Draft SWEIS should include an analysis of the utility, cost, and environmental impacts of maintaining the High Explosives mission at Site 300 when other NNSA sites perform much of the same function farther away from population centers. Site 300 has been identified by previous administrations as an excess DOE site that has potential as a green energy production site (e.g., wind farms). This and other potential uses (return to wild park land for example) should be examined.

Note: This photo was taken at the Valley Air District’s public meeting in Tracy, CA on Livermore Lab’s permit application to increase the size and yield of its bomb blasts at Site 300. The application lists more than 100 hazardous materials that will be released in these open-air blasts, which will be detonated without any pollution control technologies. The bomb blast shown in the photograph is from an actual Livermore Lab test on an open-air “firing table” at Site 300. Tri-Valley CAREs’ latest “intel” is that Livermore Lab is still seeking this permit. The Draft SWEIS, as we note above, should detail this activity - and commenters should ask about these future plans.

- Seismic Impacts

The Draft SWEIS must fully consider the latest data from the United States Geological Survey (USGS) on earthquake scenarios in the Bay Area near the Main Site and the Central Valley near Site 300. Site 300 has an earthquake fault running through it and another just outside the fence. The Main Site has an earthquake at its southeast border. The USGS has recently published analyses that show greater quake intensity and other damaging impacts (e.g. possible liquefaction) for these specific areas of California.

Commenters should pay close attention to the sections on Seismic Impacts to ensure that they are relying on the most recent data available.

- Climate Change Impacts

The Draft SWEIS must fully consider the impacts of climate change. On the one hand, it must analyze Livermore Lab operations' potential contribution to global climate change due to emissions. The Draft SWEIS must also analyze the impact of fires and other extreme weather events related to climate change on the Livermore Lab itself. In the current firestorms of summer/fall 2020, Site 300 had to be evacuated due to the proximity of the SCU Lightning Complex Fire. These types of events may increase in severity and frequency in the coming 15 years. Commenters should examine the Climate Change impacts section of the Draft SWEIS closely and can also propose climate change related research that they believe the Lab should conduct.

- Purpose and Need

The scope for the SWEIS outlined in the Federal Register Notice includes a statement of "*purpose and need*" for the review. In that section the NNSA claims: "*The U.S. nuclear weapons infrastructure is aging and historically underfunded.*" Yet, there have been substantial budget increases for NNSA and its weapons labs during both the Obama and Trump administrations. In particular, during the current administration, the NNSA budget to "modernize" nuclear warheads is 50% higher than when President Trump took office. In the context of these funding increases, the Draft SWEIS should fully review assertions in the Federal Register Notice that the Lab "*is in need of facilities and infrastructure investments. Half of the operating buildings at LLNL are assessed as being inadequate or in substandard condition.*" Commenters should use the opportunity to critically analyze why previous funding received by the Lab has not been used to adequately maintain existing infrastructure.

Additionally, the "purpose and need" statement outlined in the Federal Register Notice suggests that Livermore Lab is expecting ever-greater amounts of funding in future years. The Draft SWEIS should make these funding expectations explicit and analyze them in detail. Generally speaking, expenditures of funds should be a consideration in the infrastructure work the Draft SWEIS proposes. Commenters should question whether some new infrastructure projects should not be undertaken when their funding demand is considered. Funding considerations must be fully explored in the Draft SWEIS. Additionally, the Draft SWEIS should take into account the "need" for capabilities at Livermore Lab that might be duplicative of other NNSA sites, or should be discontinued altogether.

Further, the "purpose and need" statement for the SWEIS is heavily dependent on the Trump Administration's controversial 2018 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) and its call for a costly new generation of nuclear weapons. Over the 15-year time frame of the SWEIS, the 2018 NPR will be mooted by one or more new posture reviews, potentially very different than the one issued by the former President. Indeed, the Biden Administration has completed a Nuclear Posture Review, although the unclassified version has yet to be released. Thus, the Draft SWEIS's "purpose and need" should not be driven by the Trump NPR, which in any event is a policy document and not a law.

The "purpose and need" statement briefly notes: "*LLNL will complete Life Extension Programs [this is a catch-all phrase the agency uses to describe fully new warhead designs as well as refurbishments]*

by conducting testing and maintenance of weapons.” This statement is left to stand without further explanation of what “testing” and “maintenance” entail. Yet, it is precisely the weapons work covered by that sentence that will create “significant impacts to the environment.” Commenters should ensure that the Draft SWEIS contains clear details the scope and timeframes of the Life Extension Programs (LEPs) planned for Livermore Lab. It also needs to clearly explain to what extent – and in what quantities – radioactive and toxic materials will be on site to accomplish the LEPs. And, as noted above, the Draft SWEIS also needs to thoroughly analyze an alternative future for Livermore Lab.

Next Steps

Tri-Valley CAREs is planning a series of community events and written materials to assist the public in preparing comments on the Livermore Lab’s Draft SWEIS once it is released. Tri-Valley CAREs’ process involves hearing from community members about what they need, and then working collaboratively to accomplish our shared goals.

First and foremost, we want to say that YOUR VOICE MATTERS. You are an expert on what you think and feel. You are the expert on your health, your family’s health, your understanding of environmental protection, your community, and your life experiences. No one else can speak your truth.



The National Environmental Policy Act mandates the opportunity for public comment. But, it is up to each of us to make the most of this opportunity. Together, we are a powerful force that can change the future.

Indeed, the last time Livermore Lab undertook a SWEIS on its operations, its plans included restarting a plutonium atomic vapor laser isotope separation project (called special isotope separation). Public outcry ensured that that project to vaporize plutonium at the Lab’s Main Site never went forward. It was abandoned in the Final SWEIS. In short, it is silence that enables so many bad ideas. Shining light on bad ideas enables the public to know what’s going on. That understanding enables people to have a voice. And, our voices, together, can create change.

In this section, you will find information on a Community Forum that will be conducted by Tri-Valley CAREs. You will also get some tips on tracking the release of the Draft SWEIS and some ideas to pursue regarding the public comment period and public hearing(s).

Community Forum

With community input, we are planning a virtual Community Forum to discuss the Community Guide and the SWEIS process. It will take place on September 29th at 7:30 PM. A flyer, and the Zoom link, are available on our website at www.trivalleycares.org in the “What’s New” section at the top right corner of our homepage.

As we discuss in the Guide, the Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement (SWEIS) process is the public's once in a generation opportunity to influence the future of Livermore Lab, one of two locations that develop every nuclear weapon in the U.S. stockpile. Weapons work at Livermore promotes nuclear proliferation globally and spews toxic and radioactive poisons into our air, land and water locally.

The forum will feature Tri-Valley CAREs' staff attorney, Scott Yundt, executive director, Marylia Kelley, and bilingual community organizer, Raiza Marciscano-Bettis. There will be an opportunity to ask questions in English and Spanish.

Why September 29? Tri-Valley CAREs received an email from the Lab's parent agency, the National Nuclear Security Administration, stating that the Draft SWEIS will be released in October 2022. A public comment period and public hearing will follow its release. The SWEIS will be dense and heavy with technical and bureaucratic terms. Tri-Valley CAREs, through with this forum and reader-friendly materials, aims to help the public understand the SWEIS so that folks can offer meaningful and effective comments, whether verbally or in writing and whether in English or in Spanish.

Tracking the Release of the Draft SWEIS

A prior announcement from the Lab listed the release date for the Draft SWEIS as "October." Tri-Valley CAREs has sent email to the National Nuclear Security Administration, Livermore Site Office asking for more specificity regarding the planned release date. As of this writing we have yet to get a response. That said there are technical and non-technical ways to track the release date.

1. You can join the Tri-Valley CAREs email list by sending your full name and preferred email address and postal address (optional, but preferred to ensure there are not duplicate entries in our database) to either marylia@trivalleycares.org or raiza@trivalleycares.org. We will send a notification and action alert as soon as the release date is known. We will also send you the links to access it.

Or, check Tri-Valley CAREs' website at www.trivalleycares.org regularly as we will post everything as soon as we can.

2. You can contact the SWEIS document manager, Fana Gebeyehu-Houston, at the National Nuclear Security Administration, Livermore Field Office directly. Ask to be notified of the release date and, if you choose, you can ask to be put on the Lab's mailing list for the public hearing and similar notifications.

Contact: Fana Gebeyehu-Houston, NEPA/SWEIS Document Manager, Livermore Field Office. Send Email To: LLNLSWEIS <llnlsweis@nnsa.doe.gov>

3. For the more tech-savvy, you can check the Federal Register. The National Environmental Policy Act requires that the release of a Draft SWEIS (and other aspects of the SWEIS process) be accompanied by a Federal Register Notice.

The Federal Register is the official journal of the federal government that contains government agency rules, proposed rules, and public notices. You can find it at <https://www.federalregister.gov/>

The Public Comment Period and Public Hearing(s)

The Federal Register Notice and release of the Draft SWEIS will also include notification of the public comment period (for written comments) and at least one public hearing. The NNSA and the Lab have the discretion to go beyond the legal bare minimum and hold a longer public comment period and more than one public hearing.

So, consider what is being offered. The Draft SWEIS will be many hundreds of pages and is being released in advance of major holidays. How long is the announced public comment period? Often public comment periods for complex documents are extended to between 90-days and 120-days. You can ask for a longer public comment period, if what is offered is less than those guidelines – or is less than you think is adequate.

Will the public hearing be virtual or in-person - or will there be a hybrid model to accommodate both? What format would best meet your needs? If what's offered does not work for you, speak up and tell the government what will work.

Further, one public hearing is a bare legal minimum. During the scoping process, the Lab held two virtual hearings (after requests from Tri-Valley CAREs and the community). Are they offering two hearings on the Draft SWEIS? If there is an in-person option, will there be hearings in Livermore and Tracy?

When will they be held? Are they being scheduled too soon, before the community has the ability to digest the Draft SWEIS? Are they being scheduled too close to holidays making it difficult for you and/or others to participate?

What accommodations are being made for Spanish speakers? We note that there is a large Spanish speaking population in Livermore, and in Tracy the Latinx community makes up 40% of the City's residents. Here too, if you don't see appropriate outreach listed in the Draft SWEIS notification, please press the Livermore Lab to do better.

Comments should be sent to: Fana Gebeyehu-Houston, NEPA/SWEIS Document Manager, Livermore Field Office. Send Email To: LLNLSWEIS <llnlsweis@nnsa.doe.gov>

Please cc your comments to marylia@trivalleycares.org. This will help us know what community members want so that we may best advocate for the community's needs. Additionally, if you prefer, you can send us your comment instead and we will forward it to Fana Gebeyehu-Houston according to your instructions.

Conclusion

Upon release of the Draft SWEIS, our Tri-Valley CAREs staff will dive into the document and provide the community with accurate yet reader-friendly analyses of its content. We will post our analyses on our website on an "ASAP-basis".

We will share sample comments in English and Spanish with the community via our website, our electronic newsletter, which is available to anyone who requests it, and our monthly meetings, which are open to all interested members of the public. As always, we will encourage people to personalize and expand upon the sample comments with their own thoughts, experiences, and analysis.

We will attend the public hearing(s) and provide talking points in English and Spanish to anyone who would like help with making oral public comments at the hearing(s). Tri-Valley CAREs cannot guarantee that the Lab will provide bilingual assistance, though we will advocate strongly for it. Further, our bilingual community organizer, Raiza Marciscano-Bettis, is available to assist community members. She can be reached at raiza@trivalleycares.org

We are considering holding a second Community Forum dedicated to the SWEIS. This second Forum would take place after the Draft SWEIS is released but before the public hearing(s) and the end of the public comment period. This and other assistance from Tri-Valley CAREs will largely depend on what participants at our September 29th Community Forum and other venues tell us would be most helpful to them.

If you have ideas not covered in this Community Guide, you can send them directly to the group's executive director at marylia@trivalleycares.org and/or to the group's staff attorney at scott@trivalleycares.org

Together we can and will democratize the SWEIS process, build upon its legal minimums for public involvement and, ultimately, use our voices to make a positive difference for our families, our communities, our local environment, and our Earth upon which all life depends.

This Community Guide is written with the input of many. Special thanks are due to our staff attorney, Scott Yundt, and our executive director, Marylia Kelley.

Tri-Valley CAREs (Communities Against a Radioactive Environment)

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***Monthly meetings are on the third Thursday of the month, except for December.
Meeting details are posted on our website and circulated in our electronic newsletter.
All interested members of the public are invited.***

Tri-Valley CAREs is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, and all donations are gratefully appreciated and tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.