

Tri-Valley CAREs

Communities Against a Radioactive Environment

4049 First St., Suite 243, Livermore, CA 94551 • (925) 443-7148 • www.trivalleycares.org



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since 1983*

To: Alan Chen, NEPA Document Manager
National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA)
Livermore Field Office
7000 East Avenue
Livermore, CA 94550-9234
LLNLSEIS@nnsa.doe.gov

From: Tri-Valley CAREs
4049 First St. Suite 243
Livermore, CA 94551

Date: January 17, 2025

Re: Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for Enhanced Plutonium Facility Utilization at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory – Extending the scoping public comment period and conducting an in-person public hearing and a virtual public hearing with adequate notice

This letter is a request from Livermore-based Tri-Valley Communities Against a Radioactive Environment (CAREs), a 40+ year old community-based organization that has long monitored Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory's (LLNL) nuclear weapons work and environmental cleanup, including the security reduction to "Category III" and the de-inventory of LLNL's plutonium completed in 2012.

The January 13, 2025 announcement in the Federal Register (<https://federalregister.gov/d/2025-00451>) seeks comments on the scope of a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SPEIS) to the 2024 Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement (SWEIS) for Continued Operations of LLNL. The SWEIS was supposed to analyze LLNL programs, and the impact of the Lab's operations, for the next decade or more. The SWEIS process included a scoping public comment period and a draft document public comment period over the period of two years, culminating in the February 2024 Record of Decision (ROD). Thus, the new SEIS comes as a complete surprise to local stakeholders and members of the public, all of whom believed LLNL's SWEIS process concluded last year.

This SEIS announcement amounts to a major change from the SWEIS ROD's adoption of the "Preferred Alternative." The proposed increase in the quantities of plutonium (and other special nuclear material)¹ allowed at the facility, and the associated research and design activities with that material are far riskier than anything in the SWEIS. LLNL's ability to keep the material, its workers and the densely populated nearby communities safe are in doubt, in part as a result of a pattern of LLNL safety and security problems over the years.²

¹ Prior to 2012, the last time LLNL was a Security Category II facility, the limit of plutonium was approximately 3,000 pounds. Since then, it has been limited as a Security Category III facility to amounts that are less than "bomb-usable quantities."

This major change is significant for the directly affected surrounding community, regional stakeholders and national groups and interested members of the public who work on these nuclear safety and security issues.

With this in mind, and the needs of our 6,000+ membership, Tri-Valley CAREs requests the following initial modifications to the Notice of Intent:

- 1) A 30-day public comment period is insufficient for the public to prepare meaningful comments on such a complicated proposal that involves understanding a complex history. We request the comment period be extended to 90 days to give adequate time for NNSA, LLNL, Tri-Valley CAREs and others to engage the affected community and other stakeholders in the SEIS process.
- 2) We request that NNSA/LLNL host an in-person public hearing in Livermore to allow for members of the community, including those who do not have a computer or internet access to attend. The in-person hearing should have a 30-day notice of the date, time and place of the public hearing.
- 3) We request that NNSA/LLNL also host the virtual public hearing noted in the Federal Register. That virtual hearing should also have a 30-day notice of its date, time and link. A scant 15-day notice is insufficient to inform the local community and the broader public – and allow them to alter their schedules in order to participate.
- 4) Tri-Valley CAREs has translated the NNSA Notice of Intent into Spanish and posted it on our Spanish Language website. We request that NNSA/LLNL link to our Spanish language version of the Notice <https://trivalleycares.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/AGENCY-FEDERAL-REGISTER-SPANISH.pdf> or create the government’s own Spanish language version to accommodate the sizable Spanish speaking population in the directly affected communities who have traditionally been left out of decision making at the Lab.

Please respond to these requests in writing as soon as possible and correspondingly update the NOI website so that the public is informed about the extension of time. Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to an engaged public process on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Scott Yundt
Executive Director
Tri-Valley CAREs

Marylia Kelley
Senior Advisor
Tri-Valley CAREs

CC’d: U.S. Representative Eric Swalwell, U.S. Representative John Garamendi, U.S. Representative Josh Harder, U.S. Representative Lateefa Simon, U.S. Representative Mark DeSaulnier, U.S. Representative Ro Khanna, U.S. Senator Adam Schiff, U.S. Senator Alex Padilla