

Tri-Valley CAREs

Communities Against a Radioactive Environment

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*Peace Justice Environment
since 1983*

April 15, 2026

Dear Senator Schiff and Senator Padilla,

We write on behalf of the 6,500 members of Tri-Valley Communities Against a Radioactive Environment (CAREs), which was founded in 1983 in Livermore, California by concerned neighbors living around the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory LLNL, one of two locations where all US nuclear weapons are designed. Tri-Valley CAREs monitors nuclear weapons and environmental clean-up activities throughout the US nuclear weapons complex, with a special focus on Livermore Lab and the surrounding communities.

Today we are writing to express deep concern regarding the ongoing impacts of federal “permitting reform” efforts that are having a particularly dangerous effect as they are applied to LLNL’s proposed activities and ongoing operations in terms of how these reforms directly affect populations living, working and playing around the Lab.

Specifically, changes to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) implementation process at the US Department of Energy (DOE) and its subautonomous National Nuclear Security Administration that operates the Lab as a result of [Executive Order 14154](#) and the subsequent [CEQ new Final Rule](#) have already resulted in the effective elimination of public participation on decisions related to “Enhanced Plutonium Utilization” at LLNL.

Historically, NEPA procedures have ensured that affected communities like ours have a voice in federal actions that are likely to have a significant impact on the human environment. However, as explained in our [December 2025 blog post](#), LLNL has used Trump’s Executive Order 14154 as a basis to move forward with its plan to increase its plutonium throughput without public release of its Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) and without the associated public comment period, and agency responses to comments. The removal of public engagement at this stage is a fundamental erosion of transparency and accountability, undermining public trust and depriving directly affected communities of their right to participate in decisions that directly impact them.

This change as applied to LLNL is occurring within the broader context of rapid permitting reform efforts that are undoing environmental protections across wide swaths of government operations. These efforts are largely bipartisan in their support and the stated aim is to “unleash American energy” and streamline housing construction, but the application of the reforms applies to a wide range of other activities, including exponentially increasing the throughput of plutonium coming in and out of our local nuclear weapons lab that has 90,000 people living right up to the fence line, and which lost its authority to have these quantities of plutonium in 2012 after failing security drills.

Rather than adopting nuanced and direct reform targeting energy production and housing, or attempting to address the actual root causes of project delays under NEPA, such as inadequate agency funding and poor interagency coordination, these permitting reform efforts seek to gut our longstanding environmental protections, deprive the public of their right to be heard, and make it easier for the current administration to abandon renewable projects and create a nation that relies almost entirely on oil and gas. For example, the sweeping changes ushered in by Executive Order 14154's erasure of longstanding CEQ NEPA regulations applies across all agencies of government, not just energy creation as the title of the order suggests.

Tri-Valley CAREs believe that the current administration's disproportionate interest in energy-intensive technologies such as AI data centers, the convening of the "God Squad," and the decreased protections for and sale of public lands and culturally significant sites demonstrates a clear pattern of hostility towards environmental safeguards and constitutes an abuse of executive authority.

Congress has a critical role to play in checking such abuses of authority, but over the course of the last year, Congress has proven to enable them again and again. By including language in the 2025 Reconciliation Bill that elevated resource extraction over conservation, and by passing poorly thought out legislation such as the Standardizing Permitting and Expediting Economic Development (SPEED) Act in the House, Congress is largely complicit in the rolling back of environmental safeguards in the United States.

As the Senators representing the state of California, we urge you to reject any permitting reform legislation that diminishes environmental review, weakens public participation, or prioritizes industry interests over the public good. We ask that you stand with us in defense of meaningful climate action, keeping in mind that with the Trump administration at the helm, it is highly unlikely that permitting reform will lead to an increase in renewable projects in any capacity. As an interested party with concerns about the deprivation of public comment on "Enhanced Plutonium Utilization" at LLNL, Tri-Valley CAREs has signed on to the attached organizational sign on letter, urging members of Congress across the U.S. to oppose congressional permitting reform legislation.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Best,

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