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Peggy Vernieu
2508 Ridge Road
Berkeley, CA 94709

May 28, 2004

Mr. Tom Grim
DOE, NNSA L-293
7000 East Ave.
Livermore, CA 94550

Dear Mr. Grim:

Thank you for the opportunity to express my concerns regarding security, environmental, and proliferation risks from proposed nuclear weapons development and new plutonium and tritium programs at the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL).

I am writing in response to the DOE's draft of a Site Wide Environmental Impact Statement (SWEIS). I live in Berkeley and am horrified by what I have read of the plans for nuclear proliferation in my backyard.

Here are my comments and questions regarding six horrifying programs proposed for Livermore Lab.

1/08.02 1. Doubling the storage limit for plutonium at Livermore Lab from 1,540 pounds to 3,300 pounds. I feel strongly that the current inventory should be decreased, not increased. It is only a matter of time before another big earthquake hits the area. Another Al-Quaeda strike is expected this summer. Now that we've seen the towers of the World Trade Center crumble, isn't it hubris to think that human beings are capable of building something strong enough to house this plutonium completely secure from such threats?

2/27.01, 33.01 2. Plutonium Atomic Vapor Laser Isotope Separation (AVLIS). This scheme involves heating and vaporizing plutonium and then shooting multiple laser beams through the hot vapor to separate out plutonium isotopes. Why are we reviving a project that was canceled more than 10 years ago because it was dangerous and seemed futile? I understand that to conduct these experiments, the lab would need to increase the amount of plutonium that can be used at one time in any one room from 44 to 132 pounds. Isn't this a highly extravagant use of plutonium? I do not think this expense, let alone the added security and safety risks, can be justified.

3/26.01, 26.03 3. Dangerous New Experiments in the National Ignition Facility Mega-Laser: This plan will add plutonium, highly-enriched uranium and lithium hydride to experiments in the National Ignition Facility (NIF) mega-laser when it is completed at Livermore Lab. Using these materials in the NIF will increase its usefulness for nuclear weapons development. I am strongly

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3/26.01, 26.03 cont. opposed to nuclear weapon development of any sort. It is a violation in spirt, if not the letter of the law, of international non-proliferation agreements.

4/37.01 4. New Technologies for Producing Plutonium Bomb Cores: This plan makes Livermore Lab the place to test new manufacturing technologies for producing plutonium pits for nuclear weapons. A pit is the softball-sized piece of plutonium that sits inside a modern nuclear weapon and triggers its thermonuclear explosion. DOE says these new technologies will then be used in a new bomb core factory, called the Modern Pit Facility (MPF). The Livermore Lab plutonium pit program will enable the MPF and production of 150 - 450 plutonium bomb cores annually, with the ability to run double shifts and produce 900 per year. This production capability would approximate the combined nuclear arsenals of France and China - each year. I join California Peace Action and the Livermore-based Tri-Valley CAREs in calling for termination of this technology development project.

5/39.01 5. Enhancing Readiness to Resume Full-Scale Nuclear Tests: This plan calls for Livermore Lab to develop diagnostics to "enhance" the nation's readiness to conduct full-scale underground nuclear tests at the Nevada Test Site. This is a dangerous step back to the days of unrestrained nuclear testing and I join with California Peace Action and Tri-Valley CAREs to oppose any move to "enhance" U.S. readiness to conduct full-scale tests.

6/35.01 6. Mixing Bugs and Bombs: This plan mixes bugs and bombs at Livermore Lab. It calls for collocating an advanced bio-warfare agent research facility with nuclear weapons activities in a classified area at Livermore Lab. The DOE proposes genetic modification and aerosolization (spraying) with live anthrax, plague and other deadly pathogens on site at LLNL. This could weaken the international biological weapons treaty -- and it poses a risk to workers, the public and the environment here in the California. Let us not forget that the one bio-terrorist act that has been committed in America was probably done by insiders, not outsiders. Interestingly, this program is listed as part of LLNL's "no action alternative" as though it were an existing program -- even though it is not yet constructed, Tri-Valley CAREs has brought litigation against it, and a federal Judge has issued a "stay" prohibiting the importation of dangerous pathogens into the facility while the lawsuit moves forward. I join Tri-Valley CAREs in opposing the operation of a bio-warfare agent facility at Livermore Lab.

7/04.01 I believe the DOE plan to introduce new weapons programs into LLNL will promote a new arms race and escalate the nuclear danger. Further, the DOE proposal to double LLNL's plutonium storage limit to 3,300 pounds and triple the amount held "at risk" in any one room increases the environmental threat LLNL poses to the people of California. The SWEIS propels Livermore Lab in exactly the wrong direction.

8/07.01 Instead of proposing new weapons projects, DOE should enhance the peaceful, civilian scientific capabilities and mission at Livermore Lab by proposing new, unclassified programs in environmental cleanup, non-polluting and renewable energy, earth sciences, astrophysics, atmospheric physics and others. The alternative of a "green lab" in Livermore should be pursued instead of the dangerous nuclear weapons future proposed by the Site Wide Environmental Impact Statement.

Sincerely,

Peggy Vernieu

Vince
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----Original Message-----
From: Vince [mailto:thebbqchef@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, April 26, 2004 3:16 PM
To: tom.grim@oak.doe.gov
Subject:

Dear Tom,

I got your email address from trivalleycares.org who has encouraged their audience to write to you in protest of plans to expand certain operations at the Lab.

1/04.01 So, I am writing to you today to express my SUPPORT for you, the lab, and all the research that goes on there. Ironically, the same day I got tvcare's ill-educated flyer dropped on my Livermore doorstep, I saw a segment of "modern marvels" on History channel about NIF and the technological advances that are possible. Projects like NIF, PAVLIS and others are exhilarating. I watched the live coverage of NASA's launch of their SCRAMJET experiment a few weeks back and I cheered like they were scoring a touchdown. The research into energy technologies is equally exciting. I think it would be fantastic to be involved in such projects.

I don't know what goes through the minds of these tvcares people. The same energy solutions that people like them are so anxious for (wind, solar, hydrogen cell) were and are developed by labs like yours. I guess they want to eat their cake and have it too.

Anyway, I just wanted to drop you a line to show my support and let you know that not everyone cares about trivalleycares.

Thanks,
Vince