

THE LOS ALAMOS NATIONAL LABORATORY SITE-WIDE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT PROCESS

The United States Department of Energy (DOE) has a policy (10 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1021.330) of preparing a Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement (SWEIS) for certain large, multiple-facility sites, such as the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL). The purpose of a SWEIS is to provide DOE and its stakeholders with an analysis of the environmental impacts resulting from ongoing and reasonably foreseeable new operations and facilities and reasonable alternatives at the DOE site. The Draft SWEIS analyzes four alternatives for the continued operation of LANL to identify the potential effects that each alternative could have on the human environment.

The SWEIS Advance Notice of Intent, published in the *Federal Register* (FR) on August 10, 1994 (59 FR 40889), identified possible issues and alternatives to be analyzed. Based on public input received during prescoping, DOE published the Notice of Intent to prepare the SWEIS in the *Federal Register* on May 12, 1995 (60 FR 25697). DOE held a series of public meetings during prescoping and scoping to provide opportunities for stakeholders to identify the issues, environmental concerns, and alternatives that should be analyzed in the SWEIS. An Implementation Plan¹ was published in November 1995 to summarize the results of scoping, describe the scope of the SWEIS based on the scoping process, and present an outline for the Draft SWEIS. The Implementation Plan also included a discussion of the issues reflected in public comments during scoping.

In addition to the required meetings and documents described above, the SWEIS process has included a number of other activities intended to enhance public participation in this effort. These activities have included:

- Workshops to develop the Greener Alternative described and analyzed in the Draft SWEIS.
- Meetings with and briefings to representatives of federal, state, tribal, and local governments during prescoping, scoping, and preparation of the Draft SWEIS.
- Preparation and submission to the Los Alamos Community Outreach Center of information requested by members of the public related to LANL operations and proposed projects.
- Numerous Open Forum public meetings in the communities around LANL to discuss LANL activities, the status of the SWEIS, and other issues raised by the public.

The Draft SWEIS has been distributed to interested stakeholders for comment. Public hearings will be conducted within 45 days of the publication of this document and its announcement in the *Federal Register*, as well as in community newspapers and radio broadcasts. Oral and written comments will be accepted during the 60-day comment period for the Draft SWEIS. After the comment period is completed, the SWEIS will be finalized after considering the comments received. The Final SWEIS, which will include responses to comments received on the Draft SWEIS, is scheduled to be published in November 1998. DOE will prepare a Record of Decision no sooner than 30 days after the Final SWEIS Notice of Availability is published in the *Federal Register*. The Record of Decision will describe the rationale used for DOE's selection of an alternative or portions of the alternatives. Following the issuance of the Record of Decision, a Mitigation Action Plan may also be issued to describe any mitigation measures that DOE commits to in concert with its decision.

¹ DOE *National Environmental Policy Act* regulations (10 CFR 1021) previously required that an implementation plan be prepared; a regulation change (61 FR 64604) deleted this requirement. An implementation plan was prepared for this SWEIS, and is available by request from Corey Cruz, DOE, Albuquerque Operations Office, P.O. Box 5400, Albuquerque, NM 87185.