

# DOWNSTREAM FROM LOS ALAMOS? Your Drinking Water is at Risk

## Operations at Los Alamos National Laboratory Put Dangerous Chemicals into Regional Aquifer ...and "Monitoring Wells" Fail to Do Their Job!

Over \$100 million have been spent on monitoring wells at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), which are supposed to meet state and federal requirements to protect our drinking water. But most of them have been designed, constructed and sited in ways that mask the presence and migration of dangerous contaminants. The regional aquifer below LANL is the sole source of drinking water for Los Alamos and nearby White Rock. LANL's own modeling shows that this major groundwater source flows east toward the Buckman Wells, which provide 40% of Santa Fe's drinking water. (See map of contaminant plume on our website.)

### What Contaminants Have Been Detected?

**Radioactive:** tritium, plutonium, americium, cesium, strontium-90, and possibly neptunium.

**Chemical:** hexavalent chromium, nickel, high explosives, perchlorate, pentachlorophenol and many other chemicals.

One Los Alamos County drinking water well (Otowi 1) has already been closed because of perchlorate contamination.

### Why Don't the "Monitoring Wells" Provide Reliable Data?

Robert H. Gilkeson, registered geologist, has identified a long list of flaws in LANL's groundwater well network, including: improperly sited wells, misplaced screens in the wells, poor sampling methods, and use of organic fluids and bentonite clay drilling muds which mask the presence of radionuclides. The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) recently ordered LANL to reevaluate the wells in light of these findings.

This is crucial because right now we can't determine what contaminants are traveling in our groundwater and drinking water! But we know our water is at risk because of early detection of fast-moving contaminants.

• **We need monthly sampling** of drinking water wells, using the best technology available.

• **We need new wells installed** that will comply with all environmental laws and regulations.

• **We need independent review** of LANL's entire water quality database, to remove inaccurate data. This data has been used to justify expanded nuclear weapons operations in reports to Congress and in cleanup reports to NMED; the Department of Energy's 2006 draft Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement relies on flawed data too; any final EIS for LANL must contain accurate information about these contaminants!

**Find out more** about: well and screen misplacement, altered water chemistry, poor sampling methods, faulty analysis, and warning signs.

**Read, download, print our full 4-page fact sheet with map: "Is Our Drinking Water Safe?" at [www.nuclearactive.org](http://www.nuclearactive.org).**

This handy fact sheet is only a summary.  
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for nuclear safety**

### We Care About Water!

- After the Cerro Grande Fire in 2000, CCNS established the Rio Grande Watershed Initiative to address citizen concerns about LANL contaminants reaching drinking water wells, among other issues.
- Since 2003, CCNS has worked closely with award-winning whistleblower Robert H. Gilkeson, former lead consultant to LANL's well drilling program, to uncover and make public the dangerous deficiencies in this crucial groundwater monitoring program.
- We are working to protect the Rio Grande from LANL contamination. Visit our website to learn about our pending lawsuit against LANL and the US Dept. of Energy, undertaken with eight other community groups, for surface water violations under the Clean Water Act.

### Help Us Protect Our Water!

#### Call Congress:

Senator Jeff Bingaman at 505/988-6647  
Senator Pete Domenici at 505/988-6511  
Rep. Tom Udall at 505/984-8950

**Call the Santa Fe City Manager** at 505/955-6509, and **call the Los Alamos County Administrator** at 505/662-8080 to ask for monthly sampling of the drinking water wells.

**Oppose Complex 2030**, the plan to renew and expand nuclear weapons activities nationally, which will further endanger water supplies. Check our website for participation opportunities!

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