

BIODEFENSE PETITION TO

- **LOCALLY -- Prevent the Department of Energy from building a bio-warfare agent facility at Livermore Lab *without* public hearings or an Environmental Impact Statement;**
- **NATIONALLY -- Reallocate biodefense spending to public health agencies; and**
- **INTERNATIONALLY -- Uphold and strengthen the treaty banning biological weapons.**

WHEREAS, the Department of Energy has announced plans to construct a bio-warfare agent facility within its highly-classified nuclear weapons lab in Livermore by September 2003 without conducting a single public hearing, Environmental Impact Statement, in-depth security analysis or non-proliferation review;

WHEREAS, the Livermore Lab bio-warfare agent facility will be a Bio-Safety Level-3 (BSL-3), meaning it will handle a wide range of potentially deadly microorganisms and toxins including live anthrax, plague and botulism;

WHEREAS, Livermore Lab has a long history of accidents, leaks, spills and releases into the community and is already on the Environmental Protection Agency's Superfund list of most contaminated sites in the nation;

WHEREAS, Livermore Lab has stated that its BSL-3 facility will be used to genetically modify microorganisms of interest, "aerosolize" them and conduct what it calls "challenges" of up to 100 small animals at a time – all of which are key steps in the offensive development of bio-weapons as well as in defensive pursuits;

WHEREAS, building a bio-warfare agent facility at Livermore Lab inherently commingles bio-weapon capabilities with nuclear weapons activities and may have a devastating impact on the global control of bio-weapons and on the treaty banning them;

WHEREAS, nationally, the government responded to the 2001 anthrax mailings by hastily allocating an extra \$6 billion to biodefense without a clear programmatic goal, sparking a building boom with multiple agencies proposing to build more than thirty-five new BSL-3 and BSL-4 facilities (some of which may be unwise, unsafe or unnecessary);

WHEREAS, nationally, we can enhance our collective security by spending a greater share of biodefense funding to boost our public health infrastructure and develop a comprehensive, primary prevention approach to disease;

WHEREAS, internationally, the Bush administration derailed negotiations on verification measures needed to detect and prevent violations of the treaty banning bio-weapons, called the Biological Weapons Convention;

THEREFORE, WE URGENTLY CALL ON THE U.S. GOVERNMENT TO:

1. **Hold hearings and conduct a thorough environmental and non-proliferation review of the bio-warfare agent facility at Livermore Lab; halt all construction until the analysis is completed.**
2. **Increase spending on public health and freeze funding of new BSL-3 and BSL-4s until there is a national evaluation of what, if any, additional facilities might be needed for biodefense.**
3. **Speed the negotiation of strict verification protocols to the Biological Weapons Convention.**

Name (print or write clearly)

Address/City/State/Zip Code

Phone

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