

# The Bombplex: It's the [Plutonium] Pits

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) National Nuclear Security Administration published a Notice of Intent (NOI) in 2006 to prepare a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) on what it then called "Complex 2030" (now called "Complex Transformation").

This fact sheet distills information on the DOE's plan, which we and colleague organizations have dubbed the "Bombplex." The details are derived from the NOI and other DOE planning documents including but not limited to, "Complex 2030, A Preferred Infrastructure Planning Scenario for the Nuclear Weapons Complex."



## The DOE wants "Complex Transformation" to:

- Result in building a new plutonium pit (bomb core) production facility. This is the activity that so contaminated the DOE's Rocky Flats plant that it was shut down following a raid by the FBI environmental crimes unit in 1989. The 5 candidate locations are: Los Alamos, NM; Nevada Test Site; Pantex Plant, TX; Y-12, TN; and, Savannah River Site, SC.
- Produce a "baseline" (i.e., minimum) of 125 certified plutonium bomb cores per year. Additional shifts could increase that number.
- Have the new plutonium pit production facility on-line by 2022, with "distributed modernization in place for remaining capabilities" [read as upgrades to bomb facilities at other locations, too].
- Leave plutonium at Livermore Lab until the end of 2014, including the possibility of doubling the storage limit to more than 3,000 pounds between now and 2014. The "Complex Transformation" would take the Livermore plutonium first to Los Alamos Lab in New Mexico to be put in a facility that has yet to be built and may never be completed (called the CMRR), then potentially put it on the road a second time in 2022 -- depending on which site is selected for the new plutonium pit production plant. Basically, Livermore Lab's plutonium would be moved around (possibly twice) to meet the "needs" of the DOE nuclear weapons program, not safety and security.
- Use Livermore Lab as the location to develop the new plutonium production techniques that will be installed at the full-scale pit facility, including novel, untested robotic production lines. In essence, here in Livermore, in a populated area and on an earthquake fault line, Livermore

Lab employees will heat and pour, and do machining on, prototype plutonium bomb cores in order to "work the bugs out" of unproven techniques. This is neither safe nor sane. However, to carry it out, Livermore Lab has already designated space in Building 332 and is currently assembling components for the new pit production line, called L-cast. (Note: It is this activity that is behind the DOE's decision to double the plutonium limit at Livermore Lab.)

### **Tri-Valley CAREs' Recommendations:**

Tri-Valley CAREs will speak at the public hearings that DOE will hold following the release of the draft "Complex Transformation" PEIS in November 2007. We will recommend that a far different option be analyzed.

First, there is no need for a new plutonium bomb core production plant anywhere. Therefore, serving its "needs" should not be the basis for decision-making regarding Livermore Lab's plutonium stockpile. (While the exact amount of plutonium at Livermore Lab is classified, it is believed there are about 1,500 pounds of it at the Lab now -- enough for roughly 150 nuclear bombs -- and the outer limit for storage is more than 3,000 pounds.)

Second, the plutonium from Livermore Lab should be moved only once, and only for safe and secure storage at a more remote location, not new bomb experiments and plutonium pits.

Third, the DOE should immediately cease construction of L-cast at Livermore Lab. Similarly, the DOE should rescind its Record of Decision doubling the plutonium limit at the Lab. Instead, all plutonium activities at Livermore Lab should be terminated except for the activities needed to safely prepare and package the plutonium for shipment.

### **We suggest the following process --**

1. DOE should immediately undertake a study of potential storage sites. This study should not be limited to the 8 sites that are part of "Complex Transformation." For, if the plutonium from Livermore Lab were to be simply stored safely at a secure location, that plutonium would not have a role in "Complex Transformation."
2. Make the study as transparent as possible. The DOE should bring in independent experts, community members, local tribes where applicable, and other stakeholders.
3. Lay out a plan to safely package the plutonium at Livermore Lab. This can and should begin today. It is scandalous that, according to DOE, the agency requested zero money in its fiscal year 2008 budget request to Congress to safely package the program plutonium in Building 332 (the Lab's plutonium facility). The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board has cited Livermore Lab for storing plutonium in paint cans and food tins. Good procedures and an allocation of funding (and time) will be required to package the plutonium for shipment.
4. Send the plutonium to the selected location in a safe and timely manner. Allocate sufficient funds to ensure that is stored properly at its new location. Continue to involve independent analysts, community members, affected tribes and other stakeholders.