Bigger Blasts = More Pollution

The Livermore Lab’s 11-square mile Site 300 high explosives testing range is about to become more dangerous, if the nuclear weapons designers get their way.

This month the government quietly released a shocking proposal to increase the amount of high explosives used in open-air tests at Site 300 from 100 pounds per day to 1,000 pounds per day, a 10-fold increase.

Similarly, the proposal increases the annual amount of high explosives used in open-air detonations from 1,000 pounds per year to 7,500 pounds per year, a more than 7-fold increase.

The detonations would occur on a flat, outdoor “firing table” measuring more than 7,000 square feet. The huge open-air tests employ no air pollution control technology.

The document containing the proposal, called an “Environmental Assessment” or EA for short, is often hyper-technical and runs 117-pages long, including a permit application to begin the tests.

The reason for the tests is nuclear weapons, according to the EA. And, although the large open-air explosions could pose serious threats to workers, the public and the environment, the government plans to cut off public comment on December 7.

More than 120 hazardous poisons will become airborne in these tests, according to the proposal. Many of the listed pollutants are known to damage organs, cause cancer and other diseases and may lead to prompt or premature death, including beryllium, vinyl chloride, phosphine, hydrogen cyanide and dioxin. The proposal does not include radioactive materials, which are currently used in high explosives tests conducted at Site 300’s Contained Firing Facility.

In addition to toxic airborne releases, the open-air detonations will result in extraordinarily sharp, loud noises and other problems. Site 300’s nearby neighbors include Tracy Hills, a new development consisting of 5,500 homes, and a State Park (the Carnegie State Vehicular Recreation Area and Campground). The EA refers to Site 300’s neighbors as “receptors.”

The EA fails to adequately consider that these new tests will occur on a firing table already heavily contaminated by past explosions, including many that involved radioactive material.

We aim to stop these huge, open-air explosions from happening. Indeed, this proposal is similar to the plan for bigger blasts that we did stop ten years ago. (Livermore Lab proposals are like zombies, they often come back from the dead.)

We are confident that vigilance - and an active public opposing this plan - can stop it again now!

Toward that end, we have initiated a comment & petition calling for closure of all open-air firing tables at Site 300. It is enclosed. Please sign and circulate it among your friends and family.

Tri-Valley CAREs submitted a letter to the government requesting a 60-day extension of the public comment period and a public hearing on this proposal. December 7 is not sufficient time to review the proposal and submit comments. Moreover, no public hearing is planned. Our letter is at www.trivalleycares.org

Further, we invite you to send DOE the comment & petition asking for an extension of the public comment period by email to LFOPublicComment@doe.gov or send your postal mailed request to NEPA Document Manager, NNSA, Livermore Field Office, PO Box 808, L-293, Livermore, CA 94550-0808.

A copy of the 117-page Environmental Assessment and permit application (DOE/EA-2076) is also up on our website.
Abolish Safety?
The Chair of the independent board charged with oversight of nuclear safety in the weapons complex has asked the White House to abolish it, claiming that the Dept. of Energy (DOE) should be allowed to oversee itself.

Sean Sullivan is Trump’s chosen Chairman of the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DNFSB). Recently he wrote a letter to the White House Office of Management and Budget suggesting that the safety board be discontinued, or, failing that, largely reduced. The letter expresses Sullivan’s belief that the existence of a safety board only adds cost and not value. The annual budget for the entire DNFSB is $31 million per year.

In making his recommendation to abolish, Sullivan omits an important history. The five-member DNFSB was created in 1988 because decades of severe accidents and safety issues were not being adequately addressed. DOE workers and the public had been repeatedly exposed to radioactive and toxic materials.

Further, the board was founded to prevent new safety hazards for workers handling nuclear materials - and to protect the communities surrounding these facilities.

In sum, DNFSB identifies problems otherwise ignored by DOE. There are numerous incidents in recent years where it is clear that if the DNFSB had not stepped in, safety lapses would have continued with potentially disastrous results.

Three members of the five-member board have now come forward to ensure that Sullivan’s letter does not stand as the opinion of the board. The rebuttal letters come from board members Joyce Connery, Jessie Roberson and Daniel Santos.

Sullivan’s proposal affects the Bay Area and Central Valley. Presently, DNFSB has a DC-based technical staff member assigned to visit Livermore Lab and analyzes its nuclear operations and safety procedures. Indeed, we need more oversight in the form of a permanent DNFSB staff person in Livermore, not less. It is crazy to consider that the modicum of Lab oversight provided by DNFSB visits may evaporate entirely.

Print Bites All the News that Fits to Print

Winning Youth! Tri-Valley CAREs appreciates everyone who created a video for our 2017 Youth Video Contest! After careful review, our judges have selected the winners for this year. It is our goal to involve more youth in nuclear and environmental policy issues - and we are proud to see the depth and breadth of their visions for the future as evidenced by their videos. The three winning 2-minute videos will debut on the big screen on December 7 at our Holiday Party and Contest Awards Ceremony (see page 3). And the winners are: Grand Prize – Livermore: Changes Have to be Made by Steven Hause; Second Place - The Nuclear Effect by Nick Miriani; and, Third Place – Livermore by Eli Gooch. The winning videos are on our Facebook page and on our website at http://www.trivalleycares.org/new/2017_YVC_Winners.html

“Red Button.” The Senate Foreign Relations Committee, at the behest of its Chair, Sen. Bob Corker (R-Tenn), recently held the first Hearing in more than 40 years on “the executive’s authority to use nuclear weapons.” The Hearing follows bi-partisan concerns raised about President Trump’s temperament in general and his bellicose rhetoric regarding North Korea in particular.

While the Hearing did not result in a consensus on what to do, and some witnesses sought to preserve the status quo, it became clear that there is no ultimate “check” on presidential authority. Sen. Ed Markey spoke on S.200, the bill he has introduced to restrict the first use of nuclear weapons by the president. Sen. Dianne Feinstein is a co-sponsor, while Sen. Kamala Harris is not yet on the bill.

North Korea. A pair of bills constraining Trump’s ability to engage in armed hostilities with North Korea have been introduced to the House (H.R.4140) and Senate (S.2016). The “No Unconstitutional Strike Against North Korea” act utilizes the Legislature’s constitutional power to appropriate funds as a means to ensure the president must seek Congressional approval before the use of armed forces, barring the exception of a first strike against the US by North Korea, or their use to rescue or remove US personnel. Under H.R.4140 and S.2016, none of the funds appropriated, or otherwise made available to the Department of Defense, or any other federal department or agency, can be used for the purposes of a military strike, or introduction of armed forces into hostilities with North Korea, unless a formal declaration of war has been issued, or authorization has been issued pursuant the requirements of the War Powers Resolution. Senators Dianne Feinstein and Kamala Harris are not yet co-sponsors. Local co-sponsors of the House bill include: Reps. Barbara Lee, John Garamendi, Mark DeSaulnier, Ro Khanna, Zoe Lofgren, Jared Huffman, and Anna Eshoo

Right to Know. The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) is a cornerstone of our work to “watchdog” a federal nuclear weapons facility. Over decades of using FOIA, we have learned how to best craft requests to obtain the documents and information we are seeking, and when the federal agencies do not respond in a timely manner - or withhold information - we have successfully used litigation many times. In this era of increasing government secrecy, Tri-Valley CAREs has produced a useful, step-by-step guide to help activists and organizations use this law. Our guide includes sample requests and pieces of correspondence to which users can refer, as well as sections on how to craft a request; how to craft a fee waiver; and, how to appeal a withholding based on any of the nine FOIA exemptions. Our guide is available on our website at: http://www.trivalleycares.org/new/Freedom_of_Information.html

Citizen’s Watch
Sunday, December 10

Celebrate ICAN Nobel Peace Prize
2 – 3 PM, Livermore Lab West Gate
Vasco Rd & Westgate Dr., Livermore
(925) 443-7148 for details

See Page 4 of this Newsletter for more information.

Thursday, January 4

Letter to the Editor Writing Party
5:30- 7:00 PM, TVC Office
4049 1st St. Suite 139A, Livermore
(925) 443-7148 for details

Write a letter to the editor of your favorite newspaper in a friendly and supportive atmosphere. Our suggested topics this month are (a) your peace wishes for the New Year or (b) nuclear weapons programs at Livermore Lab and its Site 300. Or, you may choose to write on a different topic. We welcome beginners and experienced letter writers alike. Refreshments provided.

Thursday, January 18

Tri-Valley CAREs meeting
7:30 – 8:03 PM, TVC Office
4049 1st St. Suite 139A, Livermore
(925) 443-7148 for details

Resolve to do more in the coming year for peace, justice and a healthy environment with Tri-Valley CAREs! Come to our first monthly meeting of 2018! We welcome new and long-time members.

More than a Trillion

The Congressional Budget Office recently released its cost estimate for upgrading the US nuclear weapons stockpile between 2017 and 2046. Did the CBO numbers match our non-governmental community’s trillion-dollar estimate? Not exactly.

According to CBO, the basic nuclear weapons “modernization” plan carried over from the Obama Administration will cost $1.2 billion in 2017 dollars. Adjusted for inflation, the cost to taxpayers over thirty years will be around $1.7 trillion.

Notably, the $1.7 trillion estimate does not capture likely Pentagon and Energy Dept. overruns that will drive the final cost higher still.

Neither does the $1.7 trillion include any of the novel programs that multiple sources say are under consideration in the Trump Administration’s nuclear posture review (NPR), due out early next year.

New projects being discussed for inclusion in the NPR include mini-nuke designs not currently in the stockpile, weapon types expressly prohibited by treaty, and underground nuclear yield tests in Nevada, which are being called “supercritical tests” by the weapons designers pushing for them.

The CBO report also looks at nine cost-saving options, including foregoing the Long-Range Stand Off warhead and cruise missile (save $30 billion), deploying fewer new subs (save $85 billion), and scrapping ICBMs (save $175 billion). Here, the CBO analysis is very useful in refuting the narrative promoted by the Pentagon and weapons labs that every program on their wish lists is absolutely necessary. Clearly, there are choices to be made.

The CBO report stops far short, however, of analyzing a “curatorship” option for the stockpile that would simply care for existing weapons until they are dismantled. Nor does it consider an option leading to nuclear disarmament before 2046. These options would enhance global security and save taxpayers billions more than anything the CBO considered.

The full CBO report, “Approaches for Managing Costs of US Nuclear Forces 2017 to 2046,” is available on our website at www.trivalleycares.org

Tri-Valley CAREs’ Holiday Party

When: Thursday, December 7th
5 PM to 8 PM

Where: Livermore Main Library,
Community Rooms A & B
1188 S. Livermore Ave.

Drop in for great food, adult and other beverages, music, and fun and frivolity galore. We will also award 2017 Youth Video Contest winners and screen their videos.

Join us to celebrate, see old friends and meet new friends.

Our meetings are a great place to get acquainted, become motivated, and obtain information to inform your activism. See you there!
Celebrate the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize with us... in Livermore

On July 7th at the UN in New York, the overwhelming majority of countries in the world (122 of them!) adopted the “Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons,” outlawing nuclear weapons development, testing, possession, use, threat of use, transfer and/or providing assistance in any prohibited activity. Tri-Valley CAREs participated as a non-governmental organization and longstanding partner in the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN).

Next, the “ban treaty,” as it’s called, opened for signatures at the UN on September 20th - and 53 countries have formally signed on. Three of them have also completed their ratification procedures. A second signing ceremony is scheduled soon. The ban treaty will fully enter into force 90 days after the 50th country ratifies. It is within our grasp and possibly by the end of next year, which is speedy for international treaties.

But, wait, the good news doesn’t stop here! In the wee hours of the morning local time on October 6th the official news came from Oslo, Norway: ICAN won the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize!

“[ICAN] is receiving the award for its work to draw attention to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and for its groundbreaking efforts to achieve a treaty-based prohibition of such weapons,” stated the Nobel Committee. (And, if you read this as the Committee’s rebuke of the US and other nuclear-armed countries that are opposing the treaty, so do we!)

ICAN is a partnership of more than 400 groups in over 100 countries, including Tri-Valley CAREs. And, so, along with ICAN partner groups and friends at US nuclear weapons sites, we are planning a celebration.

On Dec. 10, Beatrice Fihn, the Executive Director of ICAN, will be in Oslo accepting the prize on behalf of all of the ICAN member groups worldwide. With Beatrice to accept the prize will be Setsuko Thurlow, a survivor of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and tireless disarmament campaigner with the ICAN partner organization, “Hibakusha Stories.”

Can’t be in Oslo with Beatrice and Setsuko? No worries. Get up-to-the-minute news from Oslo, speak truth to power that nuclear weapons are illegal at the place that is further developing them, post the text of the “ban treaty” for all weapons designers to read, and enjoy some champagne or sparkling apple cider with us.

Bring something fun and celebratory. This is a kid-friendly event for all ages.
Dear Tri-Valley CAREs supporter,

’Tis the season of harvests, holidays and contemplation of life’s blessings - and at Tri-Valley CAREs our thoughts turn to you and to all whose support makes our programs possible. Thank you!

Our well-informed analysis and advocacy are needed today more than ever for global nuclear disarmament and for justice for communities affected by nuclear development. And, so, I invite you to join us in resisting - and overcoming - the dangers posed by US nuclear weapons.

Please consider making a generous tax-deductible gift to Tri-Valley CAREs. As the group’s executive director, I am mindful of the amazing victories we have attained this year!

We won improvements in environmental cleanup of our land and water contaminated by nuclear weapons.

We participated with the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) to win adoption of the “Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons” at the United Nations. And, as a long-time ICAN member group, we celebrate the Nobel Peace Prize bestowed upon the Campaign for this achievement.

We implemented effective actions to stop US nuclear weapons - in the halls of Congress and at the gates of Livermore Lab.

We blocked funding for a novel, “Interoperable Warhead-1” Livermore Lab wants to create, and we challenged the new nuclear-tipped cruise missile.

We mentored the next generation of activists through our internship programs and our 2017 Youth Video Contest – and more!

Our successes were possible because you cared. I thank you for everything that you have done to promote peace, justice and a healthy environment with Tri-Valley CAREs. And, I ask you for your tax-deductible gift today. Two of the easiest ways to contribute are:

1. Send a check. Mail it to our office at 4049 First Street, Suite 139 A, Livermore, CA 94551.

2. Use your credit card. We have a secure link set up on our website at www.trivalleycares.org. We use Network for Good to process credit card donations. If you would rather speak with a human than negotiate the Internet, no worries. Call the Tri-Valley CAREs office at 925.443.7148 and either Pam or I will take the information over the phone.

I welcome your continuing participation. Together we will continue to make progress toward a more peaceful, just and nuclear-weapons free world.

For Tri-Valley CAREs,

Marylee Kelley
Executive Director
10,000 Signatures Delivered

Our petition to stop new nukes and thwart a resumption of nuclear explosive testing was delivered to Senator Dianne Feinstein (above) and other key members of Congress by Marylia Kelley in Washington, DC last month.

Peace Hero Award

Tri-Valley CAREs was honored as the 2017 Peace Hero for its contributions to nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament – and for improving environmental cleanup at Livermore Lab. Additionally Marylia Kelley received an individual award for her leadership role over the past four decades.

The awards were bestowed by the Mt. Diablo Peace & Justice Center at its annual gala on November 18.

Pictured below are Tri-Valley CAREs’ executive director Marylia Kelley and staff attorney Scott Yundt with the award statues. The center photo shows some of the Tri-Valley CAREs team at the ceremony.

4 Ways to Donate to Tri-Valley CAREs

1. **Send your check today.** Why put off until tomorrow the activism you can support today? Mail your check to 4049 First St., Suite 139A, Livermore, CA 94551.

2. **Donate on-line at** [www.trivalleycares.org](http://www.trivalleycares.org). We have a secure on-line system with Network for Good. Use it to make a one-time contribution or to set up a monthly giving program. Or, call our office at 925.443.7148 for assistance.

3. **Make a gift of stock.** Donating stock can bring you significant tax benefits. We have an E-trade account to process your donation.

4. **Make a bequest and include Tri-Valley CAREs in your will.** Nuclear weapons are leaving a toxic legacy in our communities. Will you leave a positive legacy so that we can continue the struggle?
To Close the Open-Air Toxic & Explosive Firing Tables at Livermore Lab’s Site 300

I call on Livermore Lab, the Dept. of Energy and state and federal environmental agencies to take immediate action to stop open-air explosions with toxic materials at Site 300, on Corral Hollow Rd. near Tracy, CA.

I note that:

The City of Tracy is expanding, and “Tracy Hills,” a newly authorized development of 5,500 homes, will extend essentially to the Site 300 boundary.

Livermore Lab operates two open-air firing tables at Site 300. Toxic materials and high explosives are detonated with no air pollution control equipment. The tests are conducted outdoors on gravel pads.

Livermore Lab plans to increase the amount of high explosives used in open-air tests at Site 300 from the current limit of 100 pounds per day to 1,000 pounds per day, a 10-fold increase daily!

Livermore Lab plans to increase the annual amount of high explosives detonated in the open air from the current limit of 1,000 pounds per year to 7,500 pounds, a more than 7-fold increase yearly! (DOE/EA-2076, Page 1, published November 2017).

Site 300 records and DOE/EA-2076 show that 120 different toxic poisons may be present in open-air blasts.

At the open-air firing table where Livermore Lab plans to set off these bigger blasts, 80 pounds of uranium-238 has been found scattered around from past detonations.

The proposed larger blasts will involve numerous toxic materials. These tests threaten human health and will add more pollution to the environment.

Site 300 is already a federal “Superfund” cleanup site with past pollution due to the open-air firing tables. Cleanup will not occur until the open-air firing tables are closed. A September 2017 Site 300 report states that any “required remediation [cleanup] to protect human health and the environment in the long term would not occur until the firing table is no longer active...” (Page 130).

It is of the utmost urgency that these open-air firing tables be closed and that cleanup of contaminants becomes the priority at Site 300.

Further, I call on the DOE to extend the public comment period on its proposal to increase the size of the open-air blasts at Site 300 by at least 60-days, and I call on the DOE to hold public hearings on the plan.

Signed,

NAME:
ADDRESS:
CITY/ZIP:

My additional comment(s):

Return ASAP to: Tri-Valley CAREs, 4049 First Street, Suite 139A, Livermore, CA 94551
Email: marylia@earthlink.net
**Comentario Público y Petición**

**Cerrar las consolas de tiro tóxico y explosivo al aire libre en el Sitio 300**

Urge al Laboratorio de Livermore, al Departamento de Energía y a las agencias ambientales estatales y federales a tomar medidas inmediatas para detener las explosiones al aire libre que involucran materiales tóxicos y explosivos en el Sitio 300, en Corral Hollow Rd. cerca de Tracy, CA

**Yo tomo en cuenta:**

La ciudad de Tracy se está expandiendo, y "Tracy Hills", un nuevo desarrollo autorizado de 5,500 viviendas se extenderá esencialmente al límite del Sitio 300.

**Dos consolas de tiro al aire libre en el Sitio 300 permanecen activas.** Materiales tóxicos y explosivos de gran potencia. Los materiales tóxicos y los explosivos de alta potencia se detonan sin ningún equipo de control de la contaminación del aire. Las pruebas se realizan al aire libre en almohadillas de grava.

Livermore Lab planea aumentar la cantidad de explosivos altos usados en pruebas al aire libre en el Sitio 300 desde el límite actual de 100 libras por día hasta 1,000 libras por día, ¡un aumento de 10 veces por día!

Livermore Lab planea aumentar la cantidad anual de explosivos altos detonados al aire libre, desde el límite actual de 1,000 libras por año hasta 7,500 libras, ¡un aumento de más de 7 veces al año! *(DOE / EA-2076, Página 1, publicado en noviembre de 2017).*

Los registros de Livermore Lab muestran que 120 venenos tóxicos diferentes pueden estar presentes en explosiones al aire libre en el Sitio 300.

En una de las consolas de tiro al aire libre (llamada B-851) se encontraron 80 libras de uranio radiactivo-238 dispersas alrededor de la consola de tiro de experimentos pasados.

Las ráfagas más grandes propuestas implicarán numerosos materiales tóxicos. Estas pruebas amenazan la salud humana y agregará más contaminación al medio ambiente.

El sitio 300 es un sitio de limpieza federal "Superfondo" con contaminación peligrosa y radiactiva debido a las consolas de tiro al aire libre del sitio. Un informe del sitio 300 de septiembre del 2017 indica que en B-851 cualquier "remediaciación requerida [limpieza] para proteger la salud humana y el medio ambiente en el largo plazo no ocurriría hasta que la consola de tiro ya no esté activa ..." *(página 130).*

Es de máxima urgencia que estas consolas de tiro al aire libre se cierren y que la limpieza de los contaminantes se convierta en la prioridad en el sitio 300.

Solicito que el DOE extienda el periodo de comentarios públicos sobre su propuesta para aumentar el tamaño de las explosiones al aire libre en el Sitio 300 por al menos 60 días, y pido al DOE que realice audiencias públicas sobre el plan.

Firma,

**NOMBRE:**
**DIRECCIÓN:**
**CIUDAD/CODIGO POSTAL:**
Mande por correo: Tri-Valley CAREs, 4049 First Street, Suite 139A, Livermore, CA 94551
Correo electrónico: marylia@earthlink.net