Per request from individuals at the August 16, 2019 RCLC Board meeting, the following public comments are entered into the record of the RCLC minutes for the meeting.
Public comments from Aug 16 meeting,

Read Kay Mathews
RCLC Taos meeting

• The Regional Coalition of LANL Communities has ties to some of the same people and businesses as that of the Rocky Flats Coalition, and this connection may well influence on-going cleanup at LANL and the transfer of contaminated lands from DOE responsibility, some of which has already occurred. David Abelson of Crescent Strategies, brought in to facilitate the LANL Coalition back in 2011, was the executive director of the Rocky Flats Coalition of Local Governments, and several Washington-based D.C. businesses that advised the Rocky Flats Coalition are working with the LANL Coalition. They all assisted in the effort to convert Rocky Flats to a Wildlife Refuge, an outcome which required much lower standards for clean-up than, for example, human residency. This created a credibility gap that the mission of the RCLC is to lobby for cleanup of LANL.

We’ve already seen lower standards for LANL clean-up with the redrafting of the 2005 Consent Decree between LANL and the New Mexico Environment Department. The RCLC “acquiesced” to this less restrictive legal agreement with New Mexico state government on cleanup of the Lab’s so-called “legacy waste” from decades of nuclear weapons work.

• The mission statement of the RCLC, says, “The Regional Coalition is a conduit for Northern New Mexico communities to make a direct impact on local, state and federal government decision-making in regional economic development and nuclear cleanup at Los Alamos National Laboratories (LANL). The Regional Coalition is comprised of elected and tribal officials representing their local communities to ensure national decisions incorporate local needs and interests.” The RCLC is redundant. We already have a congressional delegation that has, and continues to be, an aggressive cheerleader for funding for LANL. If the RCLC is truly comprised of officials who represent their local communities it should incorporate into the language of the Joint Powers Agreement, language that reflects what its constituents continue to advocate for. Specifically, that language would be to change Section 2. A. (ii) “advocacy of long term stable funding for non-weapons-related LANL missions.” The lion's share of LANL's funding, over $1,900,000,000 for FY 2019 alone, is allocated for its primary mission of nuclear weapons activities, including plutonium pit production, while less than 3% or $57,000,000 is allocated for all other sciences combined. In April 2019, the Director Eric Vasquez stated in the Taos Town Council Chambers that the RCLC does not have a position on pit production.

• It is premature for members of the RCLC to vote on the revised JPA until audits of the organization have been completed. As we all know, under the administration of now Rep. Andrea Romero, the RCLC violated restrictions on expenditures and reimbursements, some of which have yet to paid back. The RCLC was audited by a private agency that found numerous violations and a state audit has raised additional issues, some of which are still outstanding, such as the possible $372,000 “clawback” of taxpayer money, in its failure to abide by the terms of the Department of Energy grant. The State Auditor is considering even further expansion of audits into years beyond the six already ordered.
Many citizens and newspapers, including the *Santa Fe New Mexican*, the *Journal North*, and the *Rio Grande Sun* called for the organization's demise. Yet it has been reconstituted under a new contractor, Chicanos Por La Causa New Mexico, that itself has a dubious past, including that of CEO Roger Montoya, who had his business license revoked by the NM Public Education Department in 2012. The contractor has also been involved in numerous failed businesses, especially under its previous name, Siete del Norte.

- The RCLC does not represent the Taos constituency. I would venture to say that most Taos citizens have never heard of it. This is the first meeting held in Taos in several years. The public comment period at previous RCLC meetings has been sorely limited. As I said previously, the RCLC is redundant and our taxpayer dollars are wasted supporting it. I urge you to hold public meetings to ask your constituents if this organization truly represents their concerns about weapons production at LANL, particularly in light of the proposed pit production that will put our communities at risk.
Per request from individuals at the August 16, 2019 RCLC Board meeting, the following public comments are entered into the record of the RCLC minutes for the meeting.
Public comments from Aug 16 meeting,

Read by Gretchen Morse (1st half) and then Joseph P. Bigley (2nd half)
Shortened public comments for RCLC meeting.

Approximately 6 minutes or 3 min. each.

(If we read fairly quickly and clearly with emphasis, we should be able to do it all with 2 readers.)

Good afternoon Director Vasquez and members of the Board,

My name is ______. Thanks for taking our comments today.

A couple of us here are going to read a letter on behalf of many Taoseneos.

We ask that this letter and another letter that we don't have time to read today as a public comment be submitted for the record and that both of these letters be included, and summarized in the minutes and posted ______ as an addendum to the minutes of this meeting.

Today’s meeting is an opportunity for Taoseneos to learn about this little-known entity, the Regional Coalition of LANL Communities, that speaks for them at the state and federal level and to hear what Board members have to say about the Lab’s activities and its impact on Taos citizens.

The RCLC was formed in 2011 in order to represent the interests of Northern New Mexico populations surrounding the lab. It lobbies state and federal govt. representatives in regard to activities at Los Alamos National Laboratory and their impact on these communities.

The RCLC is funded entirely by taxpayer money, most of which is supplied by the Department of Energy and the Incorporated
County of Los Alamos.

Executive Director Eric Vasquez is working to reform fiscal policies, and to resolve violations and improper spending issues found as a result of recent audits.

These are very important improvements and we appreciate this work and the transparency being demonstrated during the process!

During its formation, a Dec. 2010 article in The Santa Fe Reporter reported, "The Regional Coalition of LANL Communities was spearheaded by Los Alamos County Council to rally local governments' support for lobbying Washington to fund certain types of LANL projects." and "Los Alamos County Councilman Mike Wheeler tells SFR the purpose of the coalition is to 'protect and preserve jobs, diversity, and cleanup efforts at the laboratory.' He says the coalition should support development of non-weapons related research at LANL, ...." 

Unfortunately, language found in the JPA or elsewhere on the website does not differentiates between non-nuclear weapons-related work and LANL's primary mission. <3 min.

Joe starts

The lion's share of LANL's funding, approximately 70% or $1,900,000,000 for FY 2019 alone, is allocated for its primary mission of nuclear weapons activities, including plutonium pit production, while less than 3% or $57,000,000 is allocated for all other sciences combined. Many people worry that the RCLC's reluctance to use language like "non-nuclear weapons-related work" anywhere in its language demonstrates that the organization actually does support LANL's nuclear weapons mission or feels that it must keep quiet about this uncomfortable issue in order to maintain itself. The Board should have the right to specify which missions it does support within its own governing document or elsewhere on its website.

Further, the DOE doesn't need the RCLC to help LANL get its
spectacular annual nuclear weapons funding from Congress. Our powerful Senators, Heinrich and Udall as well as Congressman Ben Ray Lujan, all strongly support expanded pit production.

In April 2019 Director Vasquez stated that the RCLC does not have a position on pit production. Director Vasquez has repeatedly maintained that the RCLC is not a LANL entity.

The Energy Communities Alliance website, of which the RCLC is a member, states the importance of “speaking with one voice” to ensure national decisions incorporate local needs and concerns. The website states, “To support LANL, Los Alamos County adopted the following strategic goals as part of its overall Economic Vitality Strategic Plan” This strategic plan includes this pillar: “Fully fund National Security and Science at LANL including plutonium pit mission.”

In spite of our well-meaning Board members’ honest desire to represent their constituents’ interests, there IS no speaking with one voice on their behalf if the organization supports the sustainment, development, and proliferation of the world's ultimate weapons of mass destruction, even by omission.

If the RCLC is truly Not a LANL entity, it should reassure us by reflecting its position on pit production, or lack thereof, in writing, somewhere for the public to see.

However, WE feel that the RCLC SHOULD stay true to what Los Alamos County Council member Mike Wheeler said back in 2010.

A simple way to do this would be to add the words “non-weapons related” to page 2 of the JPA Section 2 A(ii) to read, “long term stable funding of “non-weapons related” LANL missions. END < 3 min.
From the RCLC website:

"The Regional Coalition is a conduit for Northern New Mexico communities to make a direct impact on local, state and federal government decision-making in regional economic development and nuclear cleanup at Los Alamos National Laboratories."

and "Founded in 2011, the Regional Coalition works in partnership to create one voice to ensure national decisions incorporate local needs and concerns. The organization’s focus is community and economic development, site employment, environmental remediation, and adequate funding for LANL."

Shortened public comme...