

Is the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory trying to kill you?



Hydrodynamic (bomb core) test on a firing table at Site 300, 1961. The bright "streaking" effect in the photo is likely from shards of pyrophoric metal, such as Uranium 238, hurtling through the air. U-238 is one of the contaminants of concern in the Site 300 Superfund cleanup. Photo: LLNL

Bigger open-air bomb blasts mean more toxics and radiation

For decades, the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory has conducted open-air explosives testing at Site 300, between Tracy and Livermore, Calif. Although the Department of Energy last year announced it would scale back these tests, the DOE did an about-face and will conduct more tests in the name of "national security."

LLNL routinely uses depleted uranium in open-air bomb tests at Site 300. The DOE obtained a new permit to ramp up the explosive size of the bomb tests at open-air firing tables at Site 300, and this new permit allows the DOE to increase the amount of airborne radiation that these tests can send into the open air annually.

What this means to those living in the area

The radioactive particles released in these blasts have a radioactive half-life of up to 4 billion years. Prevailing winds not only deposit the blasts' toxins – including airborne radiation – to the local Livermore/Tracy area, but directly to the surrounding areas as well, including the agricultural Central Valley, and the heavily populated San Francisco Bay and Monterey Bay areas.

In fact, prevailing winds hold the key to how far these pollutants travel – and under some conditions, these toxins and airborne radiation can travel as far as 2,500 miles. All of which means that this is not merely an issue that affects only the people of Tracy and Livermore, but it affects everyone across North America.

Say 'NO' to above-ground blasts by LLNL

What you can do

Get active, not radioactive

Get informed

A wide range of information is available about the LLNL's activities in California. The following is just a small sampling of what's out there:

Tri-Valley CARES: These people are on the front lines, so to speak, in Livermore. They provide a wealth of information about what's happening at LLNL (including the new bioweapons activity going on there). Their web site is <http://www.trivalleycares.org>.

Freelance writer Bob Nichols: Bob Nichols is a freelance writer who reports extensively on this issue. His latest article about LLNL can be found at <http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2007/02/01/18355515.php>

Other sources about the effects of depleted uranium can be found through the Traprock Peace Center's website at <http://www.traprockpeace.org>, and the Children of the Gulf War Project at <http://www.savewarchildren.org>.

Get Vocal

Contact your legislators, like:

YOUR CONGRESS MEMBER/SENATORS: Contact Sen. Dianne Feinstein, Sen. Barbara Boxer and your member of Congress to tell them that you do not want increased testing at the LLNL. You can find their addresses here: <http://www.visi.com/juan/congress/>

CONTACT YOUR LOCAL MEDIA: Write letters to the editor, letting them know that you oppose increased testing at LLNL because airborne radiation knows no boundaries, and the issue involves everyone, not just those in the immediate area.

Get Involved

INFORM YOUR FRIENDS AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS: Pass on the information to your friends, civic groups you belong to, and other local organizations that the tests at LLNL affect everyone. Encourage them to take a stand on the issue.

ORGANIZE YOUR COMMUNITY: Join an organization in your community dealing with this issue, or if one does not yet exist, form one yourself. For more information about forming a group yourself, contact chouwa@savewarchildren.org.

Stop the testing at LLNL!

This handout was produced by the Children of the Gulf War Project, an organization that alerts the public to the effects that DU weaponry has on people through the exhibition of photos taken by Takashi Morizumi in Iraq. The project can be found at <http://www.savewarchildren.org>.