

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Ben Ray Luján of New Mexico’s Third District highlighted a new report by the National Research Council (NRC) that examines the long-term scientific and engineering vitality at the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) laboratories, including Los Alamos and Sandia national laboratories. In order to improve the stewardship of the scientific and engineering vitality of the labs, the report recommends broadening the labs’ mission and moving to a governance model based more on trust and less on transactional oversight.

“The men and women at these labs provide a vital service to the nation, and New Mexico’s labs are a significant part of the state’s economy. The scientific and engineering vitality of these labs has always been and will continue to be one of their most important assets,” Congressman Luján said. “I am concerned by what this report describes as a dysfunctional and mistrustful governance relationship between the labs and NNSA. Such a relationship would harm morale and stifle innovation.”

The NRC report concludes that diversifying the labs’ mission to focus on national security more broadly and not just nuclear security will improve the quality of science and engineering at the labs. “The expansion of the Laboratories’ mission into new non-nuclear areas offers the prospect of increasing the Laboratories’ appeal to top-quality scientists and engineers while also serving important nation security missions,” the report says. [Click here](#) to read the report’s summary.

Since coming to Congress, Luján has been an advocate for expanding the mission of the national laboratories in order to promote economic growth and enhance innovation. Earlier this Congress, [Luján introduced legislation](#) to encourage partnerships known as Cooperative Research and Development Agreements (CRADA) between the national labs and business that can help spur economic growth and create new jobs.

“This report highlights the important gains that could be made by diversifying the mission of our national labs to promote the kind of innovation that will power our economy,” Luján added. “With Los Alamos and Sandia laboratories, New Mexico is poised to be a leader in attracting new businesses and developing new technologies if a greater emphasis is placed on a mission

that fosters technological innovations across a broader spectrum. An expanded mission plus a stronger partnership between the labs and local businesses can lead to the commercialization of new technologies that spur job creation and change the way we generate energy, keep our airports safe, and improve health care.”

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