



Office of the Mayor

Tom Bates
Mayor

ACTION CALENDAR
July 8, 2003

To: Members of the City Council
From: Mayor Tom Bates *T.B.*
Subject: Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory

Recommendation:

That the Council adopt a resolution directing: 1.) City planning and environmental staff to conduct preliminary analyses of all major planned development projects at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and provide a written summary of land use and environmental issues; and 2.) the City Manager to identify a "Lab Liaison" who will be responsible for coordinating City/LBNL relations.

Background:

As an internationally renowned center for scientific study and as a major regional employer, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBNL) is an important member of the Berkeley community. The Lab provides crucial fire protection services in the Berkeley Hills, internships for Berkeley High students, and lends technical expertise to City staff on a range of scientific issues.

However, relations between LBNL and the community have been strained over questions of environmental stewardship, development, and other issues. While the City of Berkeley has little formal authority over lab decision-making, the Berkeley community expects the City to be a strong advocate for appropriate environmental and land-use decisions by the LBNL. In particular, City Council is often asked to take formal positions on LBNL proposed scientific and development programs.

It is difficult for staff or Council to make informed decisions about proposed LBNL projects in the absence of some sort of independent analysis by City staff. Instead,

Council Members must make their decisions based on often-contradictory information supplied by community members and LBNL representatives.

To assist the City in evaluating Lab proposal, this item would require that City staff conduct a preliminary analysis of major new facility construction projects at LBNL. In addition, this item would direct the City Manager to identify a "Lab Liaison" to coordinate City work with the lab – from land use review to fire safety.

1. Analysis of LBNL Construction Projects.

For any proposed new construction in Berkeley, staff conducts a thorough analysis of the design, construction plans and potential impact on neighbors. However, no such analysis is done on proposed LBNL projects because the City does not have jurisdiction over Lab land-use decisions. While the City does not have the staff resources or authority to conduct a full analysis of Lab proposals, this item would require a preliminary review covering the following areas:

- Identify potential environmental issues that should be investigated.
- Identify potential adverse impacts on surrounding neighborhoods or the community as a whole.
- Recommend an appropriate CEQA process.
- Make any other recommendations as appropriate.

2. Create a "Lab Liaison"

The City works with LBNL on issues ranging from environmental mitigation to fire management. This item would have the City Manager designate a "Lab Liaison" to improve coordination and oversight of City relations with LBNL. The "Liaison" would oversee the timely analysis of planned LBNL construction projects as well as coordinate joint LBNL/City projects.

Financial Implications:

While there are no direct costs, this item would require additional staff resources at a time when the City is already short staff due to the budget crisis. However, the additional staff time required should not be excessive as this item requires only a limited preliminary review and LBNL constructs fewer than one new facility per year.

Contact:

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