



Copyright 2003 Albuquerque Journal
Albuquerque Journal

February 4, 2003 Tuesday

SECTION: FINAL; Pg. A3

LENGTH: 450 words

HEADLINE: Bush Plan Increases Nuke Program Budget

BYLINE: Michael Coleman Journal Washington Bureau

BODY:

WASHINGTON New Mexico's nuclear laboratories would see big budget increases under a federal spending plan released by the White House on Monday, but other federal programs in the state could face static budgets or even cutbacks.

New Mexico's U.S. senators and their staffs will spend days analyzing the fine print in President **Bush's budget** proposal, but some key facts emerged immediately.

The overall budget for the U.S. nuclear weapons program would increase by 25 percent over the next six years. Sandia National Laboratories would have an overall 2004 budget of about \$1.5 billion, an increase of \$106 million over spending planned for the current year. Los Alamos National Laboratory is slated to receive a \$1.7 billion budget, an increase of \$142 million over current-year spending.

"The list of major projects (for New Mexico's labs) is pretty long, and that's very good news," said Sen. Pete Domenici, R-N.M., who is chairman of the Senate Energy Committee and a member of the budget and appropriations panels.

Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham told reporters at a news conference Monday that maintaining the U.S. nuclear arsenal and preventing the spread of weapons around the globe is a top priority for the Bush administration.

Abraham also said Bush's proposed budget seeks \$7.2 billion the highest amount ever for environmental management of nuclear weapons-related hazards.

Domenici lamented that the president's budget keeps funding for some critical wildfire management programs static.

"I don't think the budget contemplates a big fire year or severe results from a drought," Domenici said.

Also, there is no money for any federal land acquisitions in New Mexico in the 2004 budget proposal. Bush has reduced his request for Army Corps of Engineer projects in New Mexico from \$17.2 million to \$14.4 million.

Sen. Jeff Bingaman, D-N.M., said he was disappointed to see several programs that he initiated including dropout prevention and technology training for teachers receive no money at all under the president's budget plan.

The budget proposal contains a 6 percent increase in federal education spending, but Bingaman and Domenici said they would support even more funding for some education programs.

"Overall, the budget request for education is disappointing," Bingaman said. "It falls substantially short of what the No Child Left Behind (Act) authorizes."

The budget also proposes deep cuts in the Amtrak budget, which Bingaman said could mean elimination of the train service in New Mexico. Amtrak currently serves the New Mexico communities of Raton, Las Vegas, Lamy, Albuquerque, Gallup, Deming and Lordsburg.

LOAD-DATE: February 4, 2003

◀ [prev](#) Document 8 of 500 [next](#) ▶

[About LexisNexis™](#) | [Terms and Conditions](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Support Identifier](#)
[Copyright © 2003 LexisNexis](#), a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.