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DOMENICI STATEMENT ON FY2008 FUNDING, POSSIBLE LAYOFF OUTLOOK FOR N.M. NATIONAL LABORATORIES

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Pete Domenici today issued the following statement in relation to “all hands” meetings called at Los Alamos National Laboratory and a manager’s meeting at Sandia National Laboratories. The Thursday meetings were called to review the FY2008 funding outlook for DOE National Nuclear Security Administration and its national laboratories, based on the House-passed FY2008 Energy and Water Appropriations Bill.

“With the new fiscal year set to begin October 1, the lab management teams are acting prudently and responsibly to alert their employees to the likelihood of layoffs or reductions in force because of the House-passed bill. At the same time, it is important to realize that FY2008 spending levels—either in a final Energy and Water Appropriations Bill or a continuing resolution that includes the labs’ funding—has not been established.

“I will not deal in any specificity on the possible layoff levels within the DOE weapons complex at this point, but clearly the House-passed bill would mean very substantial layoffs at Sandia, Los Alamos and other sites across the complex.

“I will fight as much as I can for the funding levels in the Senate’s FY2008 plan, current levels or even the president’s budget request as the appropriations cycle grinds on this month. If we prevail, the projected layoffs would be much less severe than what would occur under the House plan.”

Domenici is ranking member on the Senate Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee and is working with Senator Byron Dorgan (D-N.D.) to have the Senate take up its committee-passed FY2008 Energy and Water Appropriations Bill as soon as possible. Senate passage would send the bill to a conference committee where the substantial differences in the Senate and House-passed versions would have to be reconciled.

The Senate is currently working to approve as many FY2008 appropriations bills as possible prior to the Oct. 1 start of the federal FY2008 fiscal year. As of Thursday evening, the Senate has only passed three of the 12 annual appropriations bills, but neither has been signed into law.