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Don't put biolab in Tornado Alley Web Posted: 05/01/2009 8:09 CDT

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San Antonians who worked to win a defense bio-lab believe unfair political games were played to secure the facility for Manhattan, Kan.

And they have some strong evidence to support their contention.

Sadly, that kind of shenanigan happens all the time, but in this case the Homeland Security Department's decision is alarming regardless of the reasons for putting the research facility in Kansas.

The reasons behind the decision are secondary. The site location is a monumental mistake that defies any rational thought process.

The whole country should be outraged because the lab, which will work with deadly pathogens, sits precariously in the heart of Tornado Alley.

Is anyone awake in Washington, D.C.?

The Texas Biological and Agro-Defense Consortium has filed suit with the U.S. Court of Federal Claims seeking to overturn the decision.

This clearly meritorious litigation deserves the full attention of the court, and the first action should be to issue an injunction blocking any steps toward awarding contracts and building the facility in Tornado Alley.

The enhanced potential for natural disaster at the Kansas site presents a clear and present danger for the United States and makes the lab a risky investment at the selected location.

The San Antonio group pointed out in its lawsuit that according to DHS specifications the lab would be able to withstand winds of about 119 mph.

Yet tornadoes in Kansas routinely exceed that wind speed. A tornado with 200-mph winds struck Manhattan, Kan., last year, and a monster tornado with 300-mph winds struck Greensburg, Kan., in 2007, said John Kerr, chairman of the Texas consortium.

The lawsuit argues, "DHS failed to rigorously and objectively weigh, on a site-by-site comparative basis, the relative probability of a tornado strike, the probable severity of the tornado, the gravity of the resulting injury and the burden of adequate precautions, including the comparative cost of constructing a tornado resistant facility."

We urge the federal court to halt the process and check out the claims in the Texas lawsuit.

The stakes are too high to ignore the dangers and hundreds of millions of dollars invested in the lab could be gone with the wind in the blink of an eye.

Comments

3 comment(s) on "Don't put biolab in Tornado Alley "

proud_native 8:15 AM

Oh they are awake in DC alright and working hard to destroy the economy, the middle class, and the "subversive element" that lives in the wild areas formerly known as the Great Plains.

tomesnyder 10:15 PM

All Federal spending is political because all Federal spending is determined by politicians. If the two options were Kansas and New Mexico would this editorial be in the San Antonio newspaper? Now look who's self-serving.

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