Los Alamos
NATIONAL LABORATORY

Dear Ypsilanti Township residents and members of the broader community:

Over the past several months, some of you have raised concerns about the joint effort between Los Alamos National Laboratory and the University of Michigan to develop a high-performance computing research center. With this letter, I want to assure you that the proposal is for a research computing facility and address the questions about how we anticipate proceeding in Los Alamos' partnership with U-M.

Los Alamos is a multidisciplinary science and engineering laboratory led by the Department of Energy. First and foremost, we are a national security laboratory, and we have played a critical role in our nation's nuclear security since our founding during the Manhattan Project. One of the reasons scientists and engineers work at Los Alamos is to contribute to the safety and security of our nation and our allies. However, our work is broad and deep; our scientists explore a wide range of fields, including energy, materials science, climate and earth systems, infrastructure, medicine, and national security.

World-class supercomputing is an essential tool for our work; it allows researchers to model, analyze, and test complex systems, and it powers discovery faster and with more precision than our Manhattan Project founders could have thought possible.

This broader scientific and computational mission underpins our collaboration with the University of Michigan and the purpose of the proposed facility. Building on a decades-long scientific partnership between Los Alamos and U-M, the center would allow our scientists to work more closely with U-M faculty and students on computational research across a range of fields.

The center would be for research computing. It would not be a military installation or weapons production site. No plutonium or other nuclear or hazardous materials would be produced, used, or stored at the facility. Plutonium pit production could never take place at the Michigan facility. That work is limited to specialized, highly secure facilities in New Mexico and South Carolina.

Instead, the facility would use advanced computing to model complex systems, run sophisticated simulations, and analyze massive datasets. These capabilities can accelerate discoveries across many areas of science. Researchers at U-M are using such tools to improve brain cancer surgery outcomes, accelerate drug discovery, and predict extreme weather. Los Alamos scientists have used advanced computing to model wildfire behavior, track the spread of disease, study changes in Arctic sea ice, strengthen the resilience of the power grid, and address other complex scientific and engineering challenges.

As part of Los Alamos' national security mission, some computational research conducted using the facility could relate to nuclear modernization. This work uses modeling and simulation to help scientists assess the safety, security, and reliability of the nation's existing nuclear stockpile without nuclear testing. It is computational research—not the manufacturing, assembly, testing, or production of nuclear weapons.

The proposed facility has also been described in public discussion as a "Tier 1 High Value Target Risk." It is important to emphasize that neither Los Alamos, the University of Michigan, nor any state or federal agency has classified it that way. The Charter Township of Ypsilanti Board of Trustees Resolution 2026-

05 and related correspondence from the township attorney created that terminology without basis. It should not be interpreted as evidence of a known, specific, or imminent threat to the facility or the surrounding community.

Like other major research facilities, the center would employ appropriate security measures, including controlled access, cameras, and on-site security personnel. Los Alamos and U-M would coordinate with local, state, and federal partners on matters related to safety and security.

Beyond those direct benefits, expanding Los Alamos' presence in Michigan will create broader economic opportunities for the region. National laboratories can serve as anchors for research and innovation activity, attracting scientists, engineers, technology companies, research partners, suppliers and additional investment. By combining Los Alamos' advanced computing and scientific expertise with Michigan's strengths in research, engineering and technology, we believe this project has the potential to become a significant economic development driver for southeastern Michigan and strengthen the state's position in advanced computing, science and technology. Working alongside some of the best scientists in the country at the University of Michigan, we will accelerate discoveries that improve lives while creating new opportunities for Michigan workers, students, businesses and communities.

We recognize that a project of this scale raises important questions for the people who live near it. I hope this letter helps address some of the concerns and uncertainty surrounding the project. We believe the proposed center has the potential to bring lasting scientific and economic benefits to the Ypsilanti Township community, southeastern Michigan, and the state.

Sincerely,

Thom Mason
Director