

September 30, 2019

Mr. Bobby St. John
PO Box 2078
Carlsbad, NM 88220

email: infocntr@wipp.ws

Dear Mr. St. John:

The undersigned organizations, representing thousands of New Mexicans, strongly oppose the “WIPP Forever” Draft Strategic Plan. Federal laws, agreements with the State of New Mexico, and the WIPP Permit all provide that WIPP has a limited mission for up to 175,564 cubic meters of transuranic (TRU) waste and to operate for a limited lifetime. Other repositories and improved on-site storage must be developed for other wastes and newly generated TRU waste.

Rather than complying with those limits, the Draft Strategic Plan includes no date to close WIPP and instead has new facilities, including a fifth shaft, additional disposal panels and rooms, and an above ground storage area for more wastes. Those new facilities could accommodate more wastes for which the Department of Energy (DOE) has specific plans including:

- At least 34 metric tons (74,800 pounds) of weapons-grade plutonium, to make WIPP the world’s largest plutonium “ore body”
- High-level wastes from Hanford, Washington (and other sites)
- Commercial waste from West Valley, New York
- Greater-Than-Class C commercial waste from nuclear power plants
- Elemental mercury surface storage

The WIPP Strategic Plan must be revised to explicitly eliminate those additional wastes, limit WIPP to the legal waste volumes, provide a permanent closure date, and specifically support DOE and congressional efforts to develop other repositories and waste storage sites.

Sincerely,

Joni Arends
Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety
Santa Fe, NM

Janet Greenwald
Citizens for Alternatives to Radioactive Dumping
Albuquerque, NM

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Nuclear Watch New Mexico
Santa Fe, NM

Don Hancock
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Albuquerque, NM

Susan Gordon
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