



SOUTHWEST RESEARCH AND INFORMATION CENTER

P.O. Box 4524 Albuquerque, NM 87196 505-262-1862 FAX: 505-262-1864 www.sric.org

CURRENT DOE PROPOSALS TO EXPAND WIPP

1. Bring “surplus” plutonium that has never been in the planned WIPP inventory from Savannah River Site (SRS), even if it displaces waste from other sites.

Since 1996, DOE had not included WIPP as an alternative for surplus weapons-grade plutonium. Because of many problems with the Mixed Oxide (plutonium-uranium) fuel project, since 2012 DOE's *Surplus Plutonium Disposition Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement* has proposed that at least 6 metric tons come to WIPP and issued a Record of Decision on April 5, 2016. DOE also wants another 34 MT of surplus plutonium to come to WIPP.

2. Recalculate waste volumes so that more waste could be emplaced at WIPP.

For more than 40 years, the amount of waste allowed at WIPP has been calculated based on the volume of each waste container. DOE now wants the volume to be calculated based on the estimated amount of waste in each container. There's no accepted way to measure how full a container is, or to recalculate waste already disposed.

3. Create a new surface storage facility at WIPP.

DOE has submitted to the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) a permit modification to allow for a new surface storage facility to increase the amount of waste at WIPP.

4. Rename high-level waste (HLW) in 20 tanks at Hanford (WA) and ship it to WIPP.

High-level nuclear waste (HLW) is prohibited at WIPP, but the Department of Energy (DOE) wants to rename some HLW in Hanford tanks as “transuranic” waste and ship it to WIPP. NMED would have to remove the provision in the WIPP permit that requires a public hearing, which would demonstrate strong public opposition.

5. Bring commercial Greater-Than-Class C waste to WIPP in shielded containers.

DOE's *Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Disposal of Greater-Than-Class C (GTCC) Low-Level Radioactive Waste and GTCC-Like Waste* (January 2016) includes WIPP as a preferred alternative, even though the WIPP Land Withdrawal Act prohibits transportation, storage, or disposal of commercial waste at WIPP.

6. Bring commercial “transuranic” waste to WIPP from West Valley, NY.

DOE's *Final West Valley Demonstration Project Waste Management Environmental Impact Statement* in January 2004 stated that WIPP was the preferred site for 7,118 cubic meters of commercial waste from reprocessing. Because of opposition to the proposal, no final Record of Decision has been issued and no congressional legislation to allow such waste has been enacted.

7. Bring 10,000 metric tons of mercury for long-term storage on the surface at WIPP.

DOE's *Final Long-Term Management and Storage of Elemental Mercury Environmental Impact Statement* in 2011 did not consider WIPP. But the Final Supplemental EIS in September 2013 stated that WIPP was an alternative, but Waste Control Specialists is the preferred site.