Stop “Forever WIPP”

Radioactive and Hazardous Materials Committee
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Carlsbad, NM

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WIPP’s Mission

- “Start Clean, Stay Clean” to dispose of up to 175,564 m$^3$ of defense transuranic (TRU) waste – 99,537 m$^3$ as of 7/3/2021
- Safely transport waste by truck through more than 20 states without serious accidents or releases
- Safely remove TRU waste from DOE sites
- Safely close, decontaminate, and decommission the WIPP site beginning in 2024 – DOE wants no disposal end date
Other repositories are necessary for legal and technical reasons

- WIPP 1979, 1992, 1996 laws
- Future waste generation, as there is no policy to stop production
- Reduce transportation risks and costs
- No state, including New Mexico, is willing to host the only repository
DOE Needs Bigger “Forever WIPP”

Land Withdrawal Act Statute Limit (Max = 175,564 m³)

Before Recalculation

Future Waste for WIPP

Waste Already in WIPP

After Recalculation

Future Waste for WIPP

Waste Already in WIPP

DSP-TRU Waste

Future Waste for WIPP

Waste Already in WIPP

DSP-TRU is diluted surplus plutonium transuranic waste that was generated by defense program activities.
October 23, 2020 NMED says to suspend new shaft construction
Proposed Doubling of WIPP’S Underground capacity
Two Additional Panels

March 2021, DOE’s Supplement Analysis for two “replacement panels”
April 20, 2021, EPA’s letter on new panels: “…require prior EPA approval…. Rulemaking could take at least two years.”
June 23, 2021, DOE Planned Change notice to NMED showing 5 new mains; 2 in new shaft PMR and 3 in forthcoming new panels PMR.
DOE & NMED should move forward on the Permit Renewal

- 10-year Permit expired 12/30/2020
- DOE has proposed dozens of changes
- SRIC has proposed changes
- The required public comment on the draft permit has not begun
- Venue to discuss past problems, address waste management needs, and minimize the number of future permit modifications
Needed Public Participation

• Many people should be involved
• DOE discusses the plans for existing waste at sites, future waste generation, surplus plutonium, plutonium pit waste, and other repositories
• DOE follows 2020 NAS Report recommendations, not segmented approach
• NMED proceeds with the Permit Renewal
• Governor/Legislature engage & provide direction
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