

SNAKE RIVER ALLIANCE
SOUTHWEST RESEARCH AND INFORMATION CENTER

March 3, 2010

Dennis Miotla, Interim Manager
U.S. Department of Energy
Idaho Operations Office
1955 N. Fremont Avenue
Idaho Falls, ID 83415

VIA U.S. MAIL, E-MAIL, AND FAX

Dear Mr. Miotla:

For many years, the Snake River Alliance and Southwest Research and Information Center (SRIC) have promoted safe management of nuclear waste, including the transuranic (TRU) waste at the Idaho National Laboratory (INL) designated for disposal at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) in New Mexico. The Alliance and SRIC have been concerned about the rising levels of carbon tetrachloride (CT) in the air at WIPP that have resulted in the suspension of shipments of TRU waste with substantial amounts of CT. The Alliance and SRIC support that decision.

On February 24, Carlsbad Field Office (CBFO) officials told SRIC that the apparent source of the CT is about 10,000 drums of waste from three INL waste streams that are in panels 3, 4, and 5 at WIPP. The CBFO officials also stated that they estimate that there are approximately 8,000 more drums of TRU waste with significant amounts of CT still at INL.

WIPP officials are taking various actions to reverse the rising CT levels that would otherwise result in the closure of at least one underground disposal room, pursuant to requirements in the facility's hazardous waste permit. CBFO is providing information about its actions to the New Mexico Environment Department and the public.

While CBFO officials must address the current CT problems at WIPP, the Alliance and SRIC request that INL take action to substantially reduce and eliminate the amount of CT in drums prior to their shipment to WIPP.

The possible measures to address CT would have varying technical, worker exposure, regulatory, cost, and other considerations. If INL has already examined those alternatives, the Alliance and SRIC request that the results be made publicly available. If no such analysis has been completed, we encourage INL to begin a transparent process and public disclosure of the results. Whatever the current situation, the Alliance and SRIC request an update on the status of INL's plans and actions regarding these matters.

The Alliance and SRIC believe that it is important that public health and the environment be protected and that regulatory requirements are met at WIPP and at INL and other TRU waste sites. In addition, such actions are necessary to develop public confidence that other disposal sites can be selected and operated for INL's high-level waste.

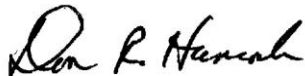
The Alliance and SRIC are aware that there are contracts and milestones for use of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) regarding TRU waste at INL and WIPP. The requested actions are fully consistent with the transparency and other requirements of the ARRA.

Thank you for your consideration and prompt, written response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Beatrice Brailsford". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Beatrice Brailsford
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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Don R. Hancock". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized.

Don R. Hancock
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