



**Department of Energy**

Carlsbad Area Office  
P. O. Box 3090  
Carlsbad, New Mexico 88221

16 MAY 2000

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RECEIVED

Mr. Steve Zappe  
Hazardous & Radioactive Materials Bureau  
New Mexico Environment Department  
P.O. Box 26110  
Santa Fe, NM 87502

Dear Mr. Zappe:

I am pleased to invite you to an upcoming workshop that the Department of Energy's Carlsbad Area Office (CAO) is sponsoring in Carlsbad, New Mexico. The workshop is titled "The Next Generation U.S. Underground Science Facility" and will be held June 12-14.

The DOE's Office of Science (OS) and the National Science Foundation first suggested such a workshop last year to explore the potential need for and use of the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) underground as a next generation laboratory for conducting nuclear and particle astrophysics and other basic science research. The WIPP underground exhibits a very low background radiation level and is one of only a few choices available in the United States for siting experiments that require shielding from cosmic rays. Now that the WIPP has opened for disposal operations, we recognize the possibility of making unused parts of the facility available to the physics community for research purposes while continuing the CAO's primary mission of safe transuranic waste disposal.

We have invited the DOE's Under Secretary, Ernest Moniz, to be the keynote speaker at the workshop on June 12. We have asked him to speak on the DOE's commitment to scientific research and the value of special facilities such as the WIPP to this research. Use of the WIPP for nuclear and particle astrophysics research could maximize the benefit of the already significant taxpayer investment in it and lower the cost of conducting OS-sponsored research in an underground setting.

We have also suggested that Dr. Moniz elaborate on the potential link between WIPP underground research and the Nuclear Cities Initiative. Many nucleon decay physics experiments being proposed or currently fielded require exotic isotopes that must be enriched — work that can most efficiently be done in the former Soviet Union, providing productive work for Russian nuclear weapons workers.

We hope that, in addition to being our keynote speaker, Dr. Moniz will choose to stay for the full workshop, which runs through noon, June 14. We would be delighted and honored, of course, if you can attend this workshop as well and participate in the activities, including a high-level WIPP tour and the exchange of ideas with the gathered scientists



Mr. Zappe  
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We are looking forward to an intellectually challenging meeting and hope you will be able to be part of it. You may obtain more information from our workshop web page at:

<http://www.wipp.carlsbad.nm.us/leptontown>

Or please call me at 505 234-7300 with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Inés R. Triay". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'I'.

Dr. Inés R. Triay  
Manager