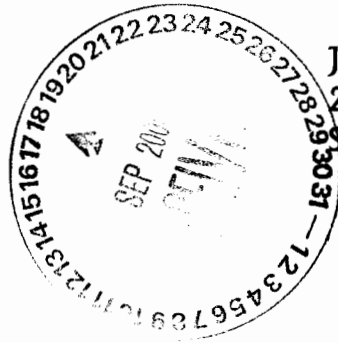


Mr. Steve Zappe  
New Mexico Environment Department  
2044A Galisteo Street  
Santa Fe, NM 87505



John Otter  
2300 W. Alameda, D3  
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Re: Hazard Waste Facility Permit Modification Requests

Dear Mr. Zappe:

The struggle to assure safety for the public from the operation of the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) has occupied the efforts of many in our community for several years. Although I did not support the increased nuclearization of our State, I did welcome the substantial resolution of the WIPP permit to allow for some R & R. So I feel aggrieved by any modification request so soon after that resolution. Is this an aggressive move by the DOE to take advantage of a desired respite by watchdogs?

A proposal by DOE to expand WIPP operations by bringing in waste which is currently prohibited and/or storing waste above ground is inappropriate until DOE has operated WIPP safely and reliably for at least a few years. Only then can the public have a basis for confidence that expanded operations will not endanger them.

In the interest of the public safety you must deny the proposed modifications until DOE establishes its credibility with regard to WIPP operations. After that, in the interest of community harmony full hearings must be held so that you may truly represent the public in the matter. New Mexico deserves no less.

John Otter

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