



**Department of Energy**

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

October 23, 2000



Mr. Peter Maggiore, Secretary  
New Mexico Environment Department  
P.O. Box 26110  
Santa Fe, NM 87502


Dear Mr. Maggiore:

The U. S. Department of Energy, Carlsbad Field Office, proposes to allow scientists to conduct a variety of experiments in the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) underground near Carlsbad, NM, to the extent the experiments would not interfere with the primary mission of TRU waste disposal. The Department has prepared a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for this project, and, in accordance with DOE's NEPA regulations, is distributing it to you and interested members of the public for review and comment.

The enclosed EA analyzes the potential environmental impacts of the proposed action and the no-action alternative. Other alternatives were considered, but not analyzed in detail, because alternative sites being considered were not suitable for many of the experiments that have been proposed for the WIPP site.

Please submit any comments you have on the enclosed EA to Harold Johnson, NEPA Compliance Officer, U.S. Department of Energy, Carlsbad Field Office, P.O. Box 3090, Carlsbad, NM 88221. Comments received within 30 days of the date of this letter will be considered prior to finalizing the EA. Comments received after the 30 day period may be considered prior to finalizing the EA if time permits.

For more information about this project, or the DOE's NEPA Compliance process, please contact Harold Johnson at (505) 234-7349.

Sincerely,  
  
Dr. Inés R. Triay  
Manager

Enclosures: (3 copies)

cc:  
Gedi Cibas, NMED  
✓ Steve Zappe, NMED  
ORC:HJ:BF 00-1050 UFC 5486