

# Public Information Meetings

## On Proposed Class 2 Modification To the Hazardous Waste Facility Permit For the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant



January 9, 2001  
6 - 8 p.m.  
WIPP Information Center  
Skeen-Whitlock Building  
4021 National Parks Highway  
Carlsbad, New Mexico

January 11, 2001  
3 - 5 p.m.  
6 - 8 p.m.  
Courtyard by Marriott  
3347 Cerrillos Road  
Santa Fe, New Mexico



The U.S. Department of Energy Carlsbad Field Office is hosting public meetings to:

1. Provide information to the public concerning a proposed Class 2 modification to the Hazardous Waste Facility Permit for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant.
2. Explain the process for submitting comments.
3. Provide a forum for an exchange of views among the public, the facility's owner (U.S. Department of Energy), the management and operating contractor (Westinghouse Waste Isolation Division), and the regulatory agency (New Mexico Environment Department).

In its request, DOE proposes to modify requirements for Drum Age Criteria (DAC). The current permit does not address certain packaging configurations that are anticipated to be typical of mixed TRU waste packages. The DAC determines how long a drum of waste is required to sit idle prior to headspace gas sampling being performed. This sample must be taken for waste to be accepted at the WIPP facility. The changes purposed to the permit will allow for different packaging configurations, and determine the amount of time they are required to sit before headspace gas sampling can be accomplished.

To obtain information about the Class 2 Permit Modification, contact Mr. Bob Kehrman at the WIPP Information Center, 1-800-336-9477. The permit modification is also available on the WIPP homepage <<http://www.wipp.carlsbad.nm.us>> and at the WIPP Information Center, Skeen-Whitlock Building, 4021 Natl. Parks Highway, Carlsbad, NM

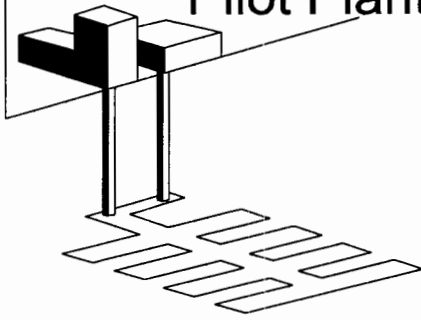
**You can send written comments to:**  
Mr. Steve Zappe  
New Mexico Environment Department  
2044A Galisteo Street  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505  
Phone: (505) 827-2425  
E-mail: [steve\\_zappe@nmenv.state.nm.us](mailto:steve_zappe@nmenv.state.nm.us)  
Comments accepted until:  
February 9, 2001

*presures public notice on  
12/11/01*

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## Waste Isolation Pilot Plant



# DOE Proposes Modification To Drum Age Criteria for Transuranic Waste Drums

### **Background**

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) has proposed a modification to its Hazardous Waste Facility Permit for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) in support of the DOE cleanup effort.

As part of a Class 2 permit modification request, DOE proposes to modify requirements for Drum Age Criteria (DAC). The current permit does not address certain packaging configurations that are anticipated to be typical of mixed transuranic (TRU) waste packages. The DAC determines how long a drum of waste is required to sit idle prior to headspace gas sampling being performed. This sample must be taken for waste to be accepted at the WIPP facility. The changes proposed to the permit will allow for different packaging configurations and will determine the amount of time they are required to sit before headspace gas sampling can be accomplished.

These proposed changes, which DOE submitted to the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) on December 7, 2000, will not adversely affect worker safety, human health, or the environment.

DOE's main priority at WIPP is to safely dispose of transuranic waste from United States defense activities in an expedient, cost-effective, and environmentally sound manner so that DOE facilities storing this waste can be cleaned up as quickly as possible. The permit requires that the concentration of gases in each container must be reported to WIPP. These concentrations are determined by taking headspace gas samples from containers and analyzing them for chemical compounds important to WIPP. In order to assure that these samples represent the entire container, NMED specified a minimum number of days after a container is closed before it can be sampled. This is referred to as the Drum Age Criteria, or DAC.

In determining the DAC, consideration must be given to the “number of layers of confinement” inside a container and the rate at which the gases pass through those confinement layers. In other words, a drum containing waste that is inside three plastic bags will have a lower DAC than a drum containing waste that is inside five plastic bags.

The permit establishes that drum age must ensure that headspace gas has reached a 90 percent steady-state concentration within each layer of confinement. The DAC values in the permit were established for five layers of plastic bags as a bounding condition for debris waste and two layers for homogeneous solids and soils and gravel. The permit did not consider other specific packaging configurations that occur in TRU waste containers.

***What is  
Proposed?***

In an effort to expedite the disposal of transuranic waste in a cost-effective and environmentally sound manner and to correct inconsistencies in the DACs in the permit, the DOE proposes the following:

- Modify the existing permit to include DAC values for specific waste packaging configurations for three different headspace gas sampling scenarios
- Eliminate an inconsistency within the permit when using the term “unvented rigid container greater than 4 liters”

In all cases the 90 percent of steady-state criterion is maintained to assure that samples are representative.

***For more  
Information***

For more information about transuranic waste shipments and procedures, or to be placed on the WIPP mailing list, call the WIPP Information Center at 1-800-336-WIPP (9477). You also may visit the WIPP Home Page at <http://www.wipp.carlsbad.nm.us>.

If you prefer, write to:



WIPP Information Center  
U.S. Department of Energy  
Carlsbad Field Office  
P.O. Box 3090  
Carlsbad, NM 88221

U.S. Department of Energy  
Carlsbad Field Office  
Waste Isolation Pilot Plant

U.S. Department of Energy  
Carlsbad Area Office  
Waste Isolation Pilot Plant  
P.O. Box 3090  
Carlsbad, New Mexico 88221

**Media Contacts:**

Dennis Hurtt  
U. S. Department of Energy  
Carlsbad Area Office  
(505) 234-7327

Robert St. John  
Westinghouse Waste Isolation Division  
(505) 234-7348  
(800) 493-9768  
<http://www.wipp.carlsbad.nm.us>

# DOENews

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**For Immediate Release**

## **DOE to Hold Public Information Meetings On Proposed Permit Modification**

**CARLSBAD, N.M., ??, 2000** – The public is invited to comment on a proposed modification to the Hazardous Waste Facility Permit for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP). Submittal of the proposed modification to the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) begins a formal review process that includes a 60-day public comment period and two separate public information meetings next month.

In its request, DOE proposes to modify requirements for Drum Age Criteria (DAC). The current permit does not address certain packaging configurations that are anticipated to be typical of mixed transuranic (TRU) waste packages. The DAC determines how long a drum of waste is required to sit idle prior to headspace gas sampling being performed. This sample must be taken before waste can be accepted at WIPP. The changes proposed to the permit will allow for different packaging configurations and will determine the amount of time they are required to sit before headspace gas sampling can be accomplished.

Informational meetings are scheduled for January 9 in Carlsbad, and January 11 in Santa Fe. Individuals attending the public information meetings will be provided envelopes addressed to NMED for use in submitting written comments. Written comments will be accepted through February 9.

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All written comments should be sent to Mr. Steve Zappe, New Mexico Environment Department, 2044A Galisteo Street, Santa Fe, NM 87502. Mr. Zappe is also accepting comments by e-mail at [steve\\_zappe@nmenv.state.nm.us](mailto:steve_zappe@nmenv.state.nm.us), or he can be reached by telephone at (505) 827-2425.

The Carlsbad informational meeting will consist of one session – from 6 to 8 p.m., while the Santa Fe meeting includes two sessions – from 3 to 5 p.m., and from 6 to 8 p.m. The Carlsbad meeting will be at the Skeen-Whitlock Building, 4021 National Parks Highway. Northern New Mexicans can learn about the proposed modification in Santa Fe at the Courtyard by Marriott, 3347 Cerrillos Road.

The public can obtain more information on the proposed permit modification by logging onto the WIPP Home Page, <http://www.wipp.carlsbad.nm.us>, and from the WIPP Information Center, 4021 National Parks Highway, Carlsbad. The public can also contact Mr. Bob Kehrman at **1-800-336-WIPP (9477)**. Additionally, information on WIPP's compliance with the permit can be obtained from NMED.

WIPP, a cornerstone of the DOE's cleanup effort, is designed to permanently dispose of defense-generated transuranic radioactive waste left from the research and production of nuclear weapons.

Located in southeastern New Mexico, 26 miles east of Carlsbad, project facilities include disposal rooms excavated in an ancient, stable salt formation 2,150 feet (almost one-half mile) underground. Waste disposal operations began at WIPP March 26, 1999.

Transuranic waste consists of clothing, tools, rags, debris, residues, and other disposable items contaminated with radioactive elements, mostly plutonium.

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