



GARY E. JOHNSON
GOVERNOR

State of New Mexico
ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT

Office of the Secretary
Harold Runnels Building
1190 St. Francis Drive, P.O. Box 26110
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502-6110
Telephone (505) 827-2855
Fax (505) 827-2836
www.nmenv.state.nm.us



PETER MAGGIORE
SECRETARY

February 19, 2002
For Immediate Release

Contact: Paul Ritzma, General Counsel, NMED
Phone: (505) 827-2855
Contact: James Bearzi, Chief, HWB, NMED
Phone: (505) 428-2512

WIPP Settles Compliance Order Issued by State Environment Department

(Santa Fe, NM) -- The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) yesterday settled a compliance order issued to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant near Carlsbad on January 7, 2002 for permit violations dealing with the categorization and certification of waste that had already been shipped and disposed of at WIPP.

The Department of Energy (DOE) (owner of WIPP) and Westinghouse TRU Solutions (the operator of WIPP) admitted that the waste shipped from Los Alamos National Laboratory had not been categorized following the proper permit procedures. However, the DOE and Westinghouse were able to demonstrate to the NMED's satisfaction that the waste met WIPP's permit requirements for shipment and disposal at WIPP.

As part of the settlement of the compliance order, DOE and Westinghouse have put into place procedure that NMED expects to eliminate the violations that gave rise to this compliance order. In addition, DOE and Westinghouse have agreed to pay a total of \$25,000 in penalties to the NMED.

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WIPP is the nation's only underground repository licensed to permanently dispose of transuranic radioactive waste left from the research and production of nuclear weapons. WIPP began operations on March 26, 1999.

For additional information, contact Paul Ritzma, General Counsel, NMED at (505) 827-2855, or James Bearzi, Chief, Hazardous Waste Bureau, NMED, at (505) 428-2512.

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