



**Department of Energy**  
 Carlsbad Field Office  
 P. O. Box 3090  
 Carlsbad, New Mexico 88221



**MAR 07 2003**

Ms. Elizabeth Forinash  
 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
 Office of Radiation and Indoor Air  
 1200 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W.  
 Washington, DC 20460

Mr. Nick Stone  
 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
 Region 6  
 1445 Ross Avenue  
 Dallas, TX 75202-2733

Mr. Steve Zappe, WIPP Project Leader  
 New Mexico Environment Department  
 Hazardous Waste Bureau  
 2905 E. Rodeo Park Drive, Bldg. 1  
 Santa Fe, NM 87505



Subject: Waste Isolation Pilot Plant – Closure Schedule for Panel 1, Schedule for Placement of Waste in Panel 2

Dear Ms. Forinash, Messrs. Stone and Zappe:

The purpose of this letter is to provide you the planned schedule of activities for the last receipt of waste in Panel 1, the closure activities for Panel 1, and the beginning of waste disposal operations in Panel 2 for the Department of Energy's (DOE), Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP). The dates for receipt of last waste and installation of chain link and brattice cloth barrier in Panel 1, and placement of first waste in Panel 2, Room 7 are firm. We intend to adhere to the remainder of this schedule; however, these dates may require change as the work proceeds.

The planned schedule of activities is as follow:

Last waste placement into Room 1, Panel 1	March 12
Closure of Panel 1 intake drift with chain link and brattice cloth barrier	March 12
Placement of First Waste into Panel 2	March 13
Start of contamination surveys Panel 1	March 13
Removal of Continuous Air Monitors from Panel 1	March 13
Removal of exhaust drift bulkhead from Panel 1	March 18
Closure of Panel 1 exhaust drift with chain link and brattice cloth barrier	March 18
Start of intake drift keyway preparation for Panel 1	March 19



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Completion of installation of S1600 overcast at Panel 1	April 1
Start of exhaust drift keyway preparation for Panel 1	April 2
Begin construction activities for the explosion isolation walls for intake and exhaust drifts of Panel 1	April 14
Completion of construction activities for installation of the explosion isolation walls for intake and exhaust drifts of Panel 1	June 27

We have reviewed the operating conditions of the WIPP Hazardous Waste Facility Permit (HWFP) for the construction and use of Panel 2. Upon completion of the construction activities, the permit required submitting a letter to the Secretary signed by the Permittees and a New Mexico registered professional engineer stating that the facility has been constructed in compliance with the conditions of the permit. (HWFP I.E.11.b.i) This letter was submitted to NMED on September 11, 2000. The NMED conducted an inspection of the facility September 19-21, 2000, and issued a letter on October 26, 2000 stating that the NMED had concluded that Panel 2 was constructed in compliance with the requirements of the HWFP. No additional inspections or approvals are required by permit conditions for the use of Panel 2. According to HWFP Condition II.L.3 and Attachment I-1d(1), the Permittees notified NMED on February 3, 2003 they intended to place the last waste in Panel 1 on or about March 14, 2003 (now March 12), and to begin partial closure of Panel 1 on or about April 11, 2003 (now April 14, 2003).

WIPP has performed a readiness review of Panel 2 prior to its use, and Panel 2 has been determined ready to accept waste. Readiness reviews and regular inspections are part of the normal operational activities for the use of any facility at WIPP.

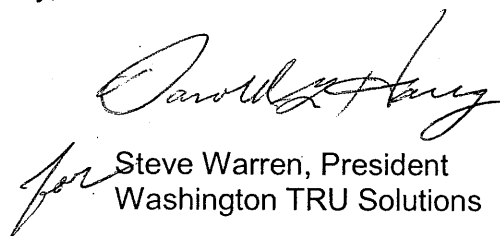
We are also taking this opportunity to inform you that NO classified waste materials were disposed in Panel 1 to date, and none will be placed for disposal in Panel 1.

If you would like to be present for the disposal of the last shipment of waste to be received and disposed in Panel 1, or any of the other activities described, please contact us. If you have any questions regarding the above information or want to arrange a tour, please contact Mr. Jody Plum at (505) 234-7462.

Sincerely,



Dr. Inés R. Triay, CBFO Manager  
Carlsbad Field Office



for Steve Warren, President  
Washington TRU Solutions

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cc:

R. Curry, NMED

D. Watchman-Moore, NMED

C. Lundstrum, NMED

J. Bearzi, NMED

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T. Hughes, NMED

C. Nobles, NMED