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November 20, 2003

Ms. Kate Burnett  
208 Sherwood Boulevard  
White Rock, NM 87544-3467

Subject: RESPONSE TO YOUR COMMENTS TO MR. STEVE ZAPPE, NEW MEXICO ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT

Ms. Burnett,

Steve Zappe of the New Mexico Environment Department was kind enough to forward your comments to us concerning a Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP)-related public notice that was published in the Los Alamos Monitor Sunday, November 16.

I will be the first to agree with you, the notice was difficult to read and to understand. From our perspective, it is also difficult to give detail to complex subjects such as sealed source waste streams and headspace gas sampling in a 3 X 9-inch ad space. Within space limitations, public notices must include the basic "who, what, when, where and how," as well as official wording to mirror the Department of Energy's (DOE) request to the state.

That said, your point is well taken. If public readers cannot understand what the subject of the meeting is, they will not attend the meeting, nor will they be able to respond to the issues in a meaningful way.

We appreciate your comments and will refer to them in drafting future WIPP-related public notices. If you would like to be added to the WIPP facility mailing list, please let Mr. Zappe at the New Mexico Environment Department know. Then, prior to public meetings you will receive public notices and fact sheets that better explain why DOE seeks to modify its WIPP operating permit.

In addition, WIPP public notices include a 1-800 number (1-800-336-9477) if you have questions, and a Web site address (<http://www.wipp.ws>) where you can review the official permit modification request to the state.

Thank you for your interest in the WIPP Hazardous Waste Facility Permit modification process. We hope you will take the opportunity to attend these information meetings where you can learn more about the proposed permit changes and offer comment on them.

Sincerely,

Susan Scott, Public Affairs Specialist  
Washington TRU Solutions

cc: D. Hurtt, Department of Energy, Carlsbad Field Office  
J. Plum, Department of Energy, Carlsbad Field Office  
S. Zappe, New Mexico Environment Department

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