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State of New Mexico
ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT

Water and Waste Management Division

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RON CURRY
SECRETARY

CHARLES LUNDSTROM
DIRECTOR

CERTIFIED MAIL - RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

March 12, 2004

Mr. R. Paul Detwiler, Acting Manager
Carlsbad Field Office
Department of Energy
P.O. Box 3090
Carlsbad, New Mexico 88221-3090

Dr. Steven Warren, President
Washington TRU Solutions, LLC
P.O. Box 2078
Carlsbad, New Mexico 88221-5608

**RE: REQUEST FOR EXTENSION TO PUBLIC COMMENT PERIODS ON PERMIT MODIFICATION REQUESTS
WIPP HAZARDOUS WASTE FACILITY PERMIT
EPA I.D. NUMBER NM4890139088**

Dear Mr. Detwiler and Dr. Warren:

In January 2004, the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) received the following Requests for Permit Modification to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant Hazardous Waste Facility Permit from the Department of Energy's Carlsbad Field Office and Washington TRU Solutions LLC (**Permittees**):

- Packaging-Specific Drum Age Criteria for New Approved Waste Containers (Class 2)
- Allow the Use of Either Track or Non-Track Mounted Conveyance Cars (Class 2)
- Container Management Improvements (Class 3)
- Implementing Section 311 of Public Law 108-137 (Class 3)

In compliance with 20.4.1.900 NMAC (incorporating 40 CFR §270.42(b)(2) and (c)(2)), the Permittees provided public notice announcing a 60-day comment period on these permit modification requests. The public comment period for the first three items listed above ends March 12, 2004, while the public comment period for the last item ends March 15, 2004.

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Mr. Detwiler and Dr. Warren

March 12, 2004

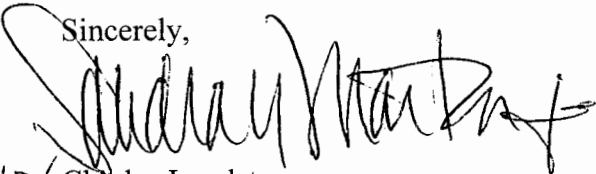
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Today, NMED received a faxed letter from the Department of Energy's Carlsbad Field Office (CBFO) requesting a seven-day extension to the public comment deadline for submission of its comments. The CBFO letter stated that this request for an extension was due to the evacuation of their offices following a gas well blowout that occurred in Carlsbad on the morning of March 11, 2004. The letter also stated that the Permittees have agreed not to request copies of any other public comments submitted by the end of the statutory comment periods until after the Permittees have submitted their comments to NMED.

After consideration of the circumstances described in this request, NMED will accept public comments on all permit modification requests listed above until Monday, March 22, 2004 at 5:00 PM. The Permittees shall provide notice of NMED's decision to extend the comment period by publication of a display ad in newspapers in Carlsbad, Albuquerque, and Santa Fe as soon as possible, and by posting this information on the CBFO WIPP website.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact me at (505) 827-1758 or Steve Zappe of my staff at (505) 428-2517.

Sincerely,



for Charles Lundstrom
Director

Water and Waste Management Division

CL:soz (HWB)

cc: Sandra Martin, NMED HWB
John Kieling, NMED HWB
Steve Zappe, NMED HWB
Tracy Hughes, NMED OGC
Chuck Noble, NMED OGC
Laurie King, EPA Region 6
Betsy Forinash, EPA ORIA
Connie Walker, Trinity Engineering
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