

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

March 16, 2004

Regarding Extension of Public Comment Period for Proposed Modifications to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant

ENTERED



WHO: U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Carlsbad Field Office and Washington TRU Solutions LLC (WTS)

WHAT: The public comment period for the following permit modification requests has been extended until Monday, March 22, 2004. In January 2004, DOE submitted the following permit modification requests to the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED). In response to a request from DOE and WTS regarding circumstances beyond their control and prevented the timely submission of DOE comments, NMED has established this new due date for public comments on the permit modification requests identified below:

- 1. Upgrade Waste Conveyance Loading Car (Class 2)**—This proposed change seeks to upgrade the current waste conveyance loading car by replacing it with facility transport vehicles. The modification request will also revise wording in the Hazardous Waste Facility Permit (HWFP) directly related to the conveyance car upgrade. This will not change the WIPP waste handling process, but rather the equipment used in the process. Furthermore, the upgrade would increase WIPP's efficiency and safety in handling and disposing of the nation's transuranic waste.
- 2. Addition of Drum Age Criteria (DAC) for New Containers (Class 2)**—In November 2002, NMED authorized WIPP to dispose of transuranic waste in direct-loaded 85 and 100-gallon drums. They also authorized WIPP to dispose of waste in direct-loaded ten-drum overpacks. However, prior to using these new containers, a drum age criteria has to be established for each. This permit modification request establishes the DAC values for each drum to ensure that the waste meets all requirements prior to being transported to WIPP.
- 3. Container Management Improvements (Class 3)**—This proposed permit modification request will improve the ability for the WIPP facility to handle waste containers. Currently, only specific containers listed in the permit are allowed to be handled and disposed of at WIPP. This modification request would clarify container specifications and descriptions, including handling and above-ground storage requirements. It would also address limitations associated with potential receipt of shipments via rail.
- 4. Revisions to Current WIPP Waste Analysis Plan (Class 3)**—This proposed modification request will allow WIPP to comply with Public Law 108-137, which was signed on December 1, 2003. Specifically, this modification will address confirmation methods used to ensure that waste shipped from the generator sites is acceptable at the WIPP site. The monitoring of volatile organic compounds will also be revised. These compounds will now be monitored in each underground disposal room in which waste has been emplaced until that specific disposal panel has been closed.

HOW: To obtain additional information concerning this permit modification request, contact Mr. Bobby St. John, WTS, at 1-800-336-9477. The permit modification is also available on the WIPP Web site at <http://www.wipp.ws> and at the WIPP Information Center, Skeen-Whitlock Building, 4021 National Parks Highway, Carlsbad, New Mexico. A copy of the requested permit modification also may be obtained from NMED at the address listed below.

COMMENT: Written comments for the record must be sent to the NMED contact person at the address below and received no later than 5 p.m. on March 22, 2004:

Mr. Steve Zappe
New Mexico Environment Department
2905 Rodeo Park Drive East, Building 1
Santa Fe, NM 87505
Phone: 505-428-2517
Fax: 505-428-2567
E-mail: steve_zappe@nmenv.state.nm.us

The Permittees' compliance history during the life of the permit being modified is available from Mr. Steve Zappe at NMED.

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Carlsbad Current-Argus
 Tuesday, March 16, 2004
 Page: 2B

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