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Pearce Praises DOE's Decision to Consider Extending Contract for WIPP

Carlsbad, Oct 12 -

Congressman Steve Pearce praised the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) decision to enter into discussions with Washington TRU Solutions on extending their contract for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) facility.

The official announcement was made by DOE Assistant Secretary Kyle McSlarrow during today's visit to the WIPP facility.

"I am pleased my discussions with Energy Secretary Abraham have brought about some positive results for WIPP and the Carlsbad area. The department has recognized TRU Solutions is doing good work and has been recognized for their performance by DOE," Pearce said.

The current contract period expires on September 30, 2005 and was last competitively bid in 2000. The contract is currently held by Washington TRU Solutions, which has offered a new package. Performance has exceeded the DOE's expectations while significantly reducing costs. Earlier this year, in an effort to reduce costs even more, Washington TRU Solutions submitted a proposal to further accelerate the disposal of TRU waste at additional cost savings.

During a recent meeting with Energy Secretary Spence Abraham, Pearce again reiterated the importance of strongly considering the contract extension as long as DOE's criteria was met.

Today's decision follows the U.S. Department of Energy's awarding of \$600,000 to the Carlsbad Environmental Monitoring and Research Center (CEMRC) for independent environmental testing and monitoring of the DOE's WIPP facility.

Carlsbad Mayor Bob Forrest said, "It was a great day for Carlsbad. I want to thank Congressman Pearce, Senator Domenici and Senator Bingaman for their hard work on behalf of Carlsbad. It was only three weeks ago that we went to Washington and here they are already addressing our concerns we raised during our visit."

Pearce added, "Carlsbad is a perfect example of what can be accomplished when we work together in a bipartisan manner with all of our community leaders."

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