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WIPP Lab Receives Accreditation

CARLSBAD, N.M., FEBRUARY 16, 2011 – The URS-managed Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) Laboratory has received accreditation for bioassay from the U.S. Department of Energy Laboratory Accreditation Program for the fourth consecutive time.

“The WIPP lab established the baseline for all workers requiring *in vitro* bioassay analysis before receiving the first transuranic waste shipment in 1999, and since then the lab continues monitoring WIPP personnel,” said Mansour Akbarzadeh, laboratory manager of Safety Management Solutions, a URS subsidiary that oversees the laboratory. “As of now, all reported results from bioassay analyses have shown no exposure to employees.”

To receive accreditation, the laboratory must demonstrate its competence by meeting acceptance criteria on performance evaluation samples provided by DOE. The lab must also undergo and pass an extensive on-site audit every three years.

The lab conducts *in vitro* bioassay analysis – meaning it analyses levels of radioactivity in the biological waste of staff who might have come into contact with radiological material during the course of their job assignments.

The WIPP Laboratory is located within the Carlsbad Environmental Monitoring & Research Center (CEMRC), a division of New Mexico State University’s Institute for Energy and the Environment. URS also provides bioassay analytical services to CEMRC and other organizations in support of the WIPP project.

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Since 1999, transuranic waste temporarily stored at sites around the country has been shipped to WIPP and permanently disposed in rooms mined out of an ancient salt formation 2,150 feet below the surface. WIPP is located 26 miles southeast of Carlsbad, N.M. URS's Washington TRU Solutions manages and operates the WIPP facility for DOE.

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