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For Immediate Release

Workforce Restructuring Announced at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant



CARLSBAD, N.M., April 7, 2011 – Washington TRU Solutions (WTS) announced plans yesterday to restructure its workforce at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) to align its scope of work with existing budgets.

WTS, the management and operating contractor for the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) at the WIPP, has developed a restructuring plan to minimize impacts to employees and to assure a workforce skill mix to safely accomplish DOE goals at the plant. In a worst-case scenario, the plan may impact up to 90 people.

The first phase of the plan includes a voluntary separation program and, if necessary, a follow-on involuntary separation program if funded workforce levels are not achieved. Both programs offer eligible employees continued medical coverage, severance pay, education assistance and outplacement services.

“WTS will make every effort to minimize the number of employees that could be affected by this transition,” said Farok Sharif, WTS president and general manager. “It is our hope that we can identify enough cost savings through the voluntary separation program and in other areas that it won’t be necessary to have layoffs. Departmental budgets, overtime pay and other areas are being evaluated for cost savings.”

According to Sharif, since 2008 WTS slowly increased its workforce to meet expanded scope at WIPP. As the workload decreased, WTS planned to use attrition, which generally hovers around 6 to 8 percent annually, to help reduce staffing levels. For the past two years, however, the attrition rate has dropped below 2 percent. The lower-than-expected attrition rate



has created employment levels that are greater than available funds, necessitating a restructuring of the WTS workforce.

“We are committed to making this transition as easy as possible for our employees and neighboring communities,” Sharif said.

Despite the workforce restructuring plan, WTS is prepared to meet DOE’s goal of 90 percent disposal of all legacy transuranic waste by 2015, further reducing the country’s nuclear waste footprint. Over the past 12 years, WIPP has received more than 9,300 waste shipments, completely disposing of inventories at 17 temporary storage sites around the country, including Rocky Flats near Denver, Colorado.

The WIPP is designed to safely isolate defense-related transuranic waste from people and the environment. Waste is shipped to WIPP and permanently disposed in rooms mined out of an ancient salt formation 2,150 feet below the earth’s surface. WIPP, which began waste disposal operations in March 1999, is located 26 miles outside of Carlsbad, N.M.