



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
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For immediate release

WIPP Receives First Remote-Handled Waste Shipment From Sandia Labs

CARLSBAD, N.M., December 21, 2011 – The U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) has received the first of eight planned defense-related remote-handled transuranic (RH-TRU) waste shipments from Sandia National Laboratories (SNL) in Albuquerque. The shipment arrived December 16 for permanent disposal in WIPP's underground repository.

DOE National TRU Program Director J.R. Stroble said the shipment is significant to WIPP. "Our goal is to reduce the nation's nuclear waste footprint and we routinely receive shipments from around the country," said Stroble. "This first shipment of RH-TRU waste from Sandia begins the final stages of eliminating legacy TRU waste from a DOE site in New Mexico."

SNL and WIPP Central Characterization Project personnel have worked for more than a year to prepare the RH-TRU waste for shipment. Since 2010, three shipments of contact-handled TRU waste were sent from Sandia to Idaho's Advanced Mixed Waste Treatment Project for characterization and certification prior to final shipment to WIPP. Cleanup of all TRU waste at SNL is on schedule for completion in March 2012.

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DOE efforts to clean up New Mexico's TRU waste include 913 shipments from Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) in northern New Mexico to WIPP. TRU waste is the byproduct of nuclear defense program research and weapons production. Both SNL and LANL milestones are supported as part of a \$172 million American Recovery and Reinvestment Act investment to expedite legacy TRU waste disposal activities across the DOE complex.

The Waste Isolation Pilot Plant is a U.S. Department of Energy facility designed to safely isolate defense-related TRU waste from people and the environment. Waste temporarily stored at sites around the country is shipped to WIPP and permanently disposed in rooms mined out of an ancient salt formation 2,150 feet below the surface. WIPP, which began waste disposal operations in 1999, is located 26 miles outside of Carlsbad, N.M.

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