

**Allen, Pam, NMENV**

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**From:** Maestas, Ricardo, NMENV  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 11, 2012 11:54 AM  
**To:** Allen, Pam, NMENV  
**Subject:** FW: "SRS Waste Plutonium to be Sent to New Mexico," Augusta Chronicle, June 12, 2012

WIPP file

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**From:** Kieling, John, NMENV  
**Sent:** Friday, June 15, 2012 7:56 AM  
**To:** Kliphuis, Trais, NMENV; Maestas, Ricardo, NMENV; Holmes, Steve, NMENV  
**Subject:** FW: "SRS Waste Plutonium to be Sent to New Mexico," Augusta Chronicle, June 12, 2012

FYI...

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**From:** McCauslin, Susan - DOE [<mailto:susan.mccauslin@wipp.ws>]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 13, 2012 4:56 PM  
**To:** Kieling, John, NMENV  
**Cc:** Stroble, J. R. - DOE  
**Subject:** FW: "SRS Waste Plutonium to be Sent to New Mexico," Augusta Chronicle, June 12, 2012

John, as I discussed in my telephone message to you today, below is the article in the Chronicle regarding waste plutonium shipments to WIPP. Please let me know if you have any questions.

*Susan McCauslin*  
(575) 234-7349

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**From:** Gill, Deb - DOE  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 13, 2012 10:44 AM  
**To:** DL CBFO Newsclip Recipients  
**Subject:** "SRS Waste Plutonium to be Sent to New Mexico," Augusta Chronicle, June 12, 2012

**SRS waste plutonium to be sent to New Mexico  
Augusta Chronicle, June 12, 2012**

Some of Savannah River Site's most contaminated Cold War nuclear waste will leave South Carolina this month under a new program to export plutonium to New Mexico.

The plan, which will commence with a demonstration shipment the week of June 25, involves using a new inert material known as "stardust," which is blended with the waste to render it unattractive to adversaries and make it easier and safer to transport.

The goal is to ship 5 kilograms at a time to the Department of Energy's Waste Isolation Pilot Plant near Carlsbad, N.M., where lower-level "transuranic" waste is buried in 250-million-year-old salt deposits a half-mile beneath the Chihuahuan Desert.

Unlike pure plutonium from "pits" once installed on nuclear warheads, the 4.3 metric tons of contaminated "non-pit" plutonium stored at SRS cannot be used in its mixed oxide plant, which is under construction and will blend surplus plutonium into commercial reactor fuel.

"This is material with no recoverable value, not suitable for MOX, so we're discarding it as a waste product," said Steve Howell, the deputy director for environmental management operations for Savannah River Nuclear Solutions.



Once blended with other materials, the 35 kilograms of plutonium waste will fill 35 shipping drums that can be transported by truck inside specially designed containers.

Currently, 585 kilograms of waste plutonium are awaiting shipment to New Mexico, but Howell said the amount could be expanded to 4.3 metric tons over a 20-year period.

John Gilmour, the solid waste management director for SRNS, said the decision to send the material to New Mexico was made after it was determined the plutonium could not be used in the MOX program.

After the inaugural shipment later this month, however, it might be awhile before additional plutonium is sent, he said.

Efforts remain under way to complete a lingering Recovery Act mission involving the shipment of 5,200 cubic meters of transuranic waste to the New Mexico site. So far, more than 3,000 cubic meters have been disposed.

"Every week, we are shipping more of that out of here," he said. "Right now the priority is the legacy TRU and finishing the Recovery Act work."

Once that project is completed, additional plutonium shipments can resume.

"We already have more than 400 (drums) ready to ship," he said.