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WIPP UPDATE: April 24, 2014

DOE Issues WIPP Radiological Release Investigation Report

Today, the Department of Energy's (DOE) Office of Environmental Management (EM) released the initial accident investigation report related to the February 14 radiological release at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP).

The report's initial investigation focused on the reaction to the radioactive material release, including related exposure to aboveground workers and the response actions. After the entry teams determine the source of the radiological event, the accident investigation board will release a supplemental report focused on the direct cause of the release and worker protection measures in the underground facility.

WIPP has already started implementing several corrective actions to address the issues raised in the report. Federal employees from across the DOE complex provided support and guidance to improve operations at the Carlsbad Field Office, including emergency management, industrial health, nuclear safety, health physics, and confinement ventilation. DOE has also begun evaluating additional permanent staffing needs to improve oversight needs related to the Carlsbad Field Office. The site has also added federal leadership to its Emergency Operations Center roster, and it is conducting frequent emergency training and drills.

Nuclear Waste Partnership (NWP) has initiated significant changes, adding leadership with extensive nuclear experience and increasing project management's direct interaction with shift crews. In addition to adding a new project manager, recovery manager, and deputy recovery manager, NWP also added experts in safety and health, radiation protection, training and procedures, and emergency management. Additionally, the company has bolstered its Contractor Assurance program to ensure compliance in all areas of its operations. The expanded NWP monitoring network includes the addition of a real-time continuous air monitor at Station B and new hand and shoe monitors for all site employees leaving the site.

These actions are just the first step. The federal and contractor management teams are closely reviewing the report and will address all of the findings.

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The full accident investigation report can be viewed here:

<http://energy.gov/em/downloads/radiological-release-accident-investigation-report>

New environmental monitoring results available

New air monitoring results have been posted to the WIPP recovery website. Samples continue to return with no indication of contamination. For all monitoring results, see

http://www.wipp.energy.gov/wipprecovery/sampling_results.html

Town hall meetings return to Thursdays

May 1 – The City of Carlsbad and DOE will co-host a weekly meeting featuring updates on WIPP recovery activities. The meeting is scheduled on Thursday at 5:30 p.m. Location: Carlsbad City Council Chambers, 101 N. Halagueno Street. Live streaming of the weekly meetings can be seen at

<http://new.livestream.com/rrv/>.