Senators say feds put WIPP workers at risk

Democratic U.S. Sens. Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich are blaming a federal agency for putting workers at risk at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant near Carlsbad.
In a news release sent Monday, Udall and Heinrich said the Mine Safety and Health Administration did not conduct routine safety inspections at WIPP. They said the MSHA had done only two inspections during the three years before a truck caught fire at the plant in February. The MSHA performed an inspection of the WIPP facility again in June, during which it issued 52 notices for violations of mandatory safety or health standards. According to a letter from the Labor Department, the MSHA claims confusion over its authority and unresolved negotiations affected their inspections. The agency says it is now doing the inspections four times a year, as required by law.