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Department of Energy
Carlsbad Field Office
P. O. Box 3090
Carlsbad, New Mexico 88221

NOV 21 2014

Mr. John E. Kieling, Bureau Chief
Hazardous Waste Bureau
New Mexico Environment Department
2905 Rodeo Park Drive East, Building 1
Santa Fe, NM 87508-6303

Mr. Tom Blaine, Division Director
Environmental Health Division
Harold Runnels Building
1190 Saint Francis Drive, Room 4050
Santa Fe, NM 87502-5469

Subject: WIPP Nitrate Salt Bearing Waste Container Isolation Plan Implementation Update,
November 20, 2014

Dear Mr. Kieling and Mr. Blaine:

The purpose of this letter is to provide the New Mexico Environment Department the WIPP Nitrate Salt Bearing Waste Container Isolation Plan Implementation Update, November 20, 2014. This update will be posted to the WIPP Information Repository within five working days.

We certify under penalty of law that this document and all attachments were prepared under our direction or supervision in accordance with a system designed to assure that qualified personnel properly gather and evaluate the information submitted. Based on our inquiry of the person or persons who manage the system, or those persons directly responsible for gathering the information, the information submitted is, to the best of our knowledge and belief, true, accurate, and complete. We are aware that there are significant penalties for submitting false information, including the possibility of fine and imprisonment for knowing violations.

Please address any questions you may have regarding the WIPP Nitrate Salt Bearing Waste Container Isolation Plan Implementation Update, November 20, 2014, to Mr. George T. Basabilvazo at (575) 234-7488.

Sincerely,


Jose R. Franco, Manager
Carlsbad Field Office


Robert L. McQuinn, Project Manager
Nuclear Waste Partnership LLC

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*ED denotes electronic distribution



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WIPP Nitrate Salt Bearing Waste Container Isolation Plan Implementation Update

November 20, 2014

Panel 6 Initial Closure

Access to Panel 6

a. Rollback

- Contamination Assessment—Radiological contamination assessments of the underground are ongoing.
- Fixing/Decontamination Activities—Not started.
- Underground Entries—Preventive maintenance activities are underway on various pieces of heavy equipment in the underground. The Underground Services office area has been rolled back to a controlled area. Entries this week are underway.

b. Ground Control Status

- Shaft/Hoist—Preventive maintenance and preoperational checks continue in support of placing the Waste Hoist back in service. The Waste Hoist has been placed in service for conveyance of equipment and emergency egress. With the hoist available for egress, we are in a safer position for our underground activities and have increased the allowed underground staffing from 24 to 75 in order to increase our pace of safety-related activities such as bolting and panel closure. Once final inspections are complete, the Waste Hoist will be brought into full service. The Waste Shaft sump at the bottom of the shaft is the lowest point of the mine and therefore collects water from areas of the mine such as the Exhaust Shaft. Accumulated water continues to be removed to uncover the headrope/tailrope guide weights. Once this activity is complete then final inspections can be performed.
- Bolting—Priorities continue to include resumption of bolting and the initial closure of Panel 6. Bolting will need to be initiated in the Panel 6 entries in preparation to support Panel 6 initial closure activities. Underground bolting in the uncontaminated areas resumed on November 15, 2014. Bolting is being prioritized based on geotechnical inspections and surveys. The E-140 drift will be the highest priority area, with operations to move toward Panel 6 to ensure safe access for the beginning of initial panel closure. Two new electric scissor lifts have been downloaded to the underground. Preparations have begun for cleaning and maintenance of bolting equipment to be used in contaminated areas.

WIPP Nitrate Salt Bearing Waste Container Isolation Plan Implementation Update

November 20, 2014

c. Habitability

- Communication Systems—Initial inspections have been performed for the area between the Air Intake Shaft and Salt Shaft Station. Radiological rollback has allowed access to some mine phones, radio, central monitoring system enable/disable audit, and public address system locations in this limited area. As a result, operability tests have been performed for these underground mine phones, radio, central monitoring system enable/disable audit, and public address system locations. As radiological rollback continues towards Panel 6, mine phones in the Panel 6 area will be checked and, if necessary, will be repaired and have batteries replaced.
- Self-contained self-rescuer— caches will be restocked, if needed, in the drifts (e.g., W-30, S-2750) to Panel 6. Habitability activities have started near the shaft areas and are progressing towards the south end of the underground via drifts (E-140, W-30 and W-170) and will continue towards drifts (S-2750 and S-3080) that provide access to Panel 6 to support Panel 6 initial closure activities.
- Eye wash stations— inspections in accessible areas have been completed.
- Other Activities—Underground fuel storage tank leak protection and water test inspections have been completed.

d. Drills, Training, Mockups

- An underground evacuation drill was performed on November 5, 2014.

Equipment/Ventilation/Materials

a. Electrical

- Ongoing visual checks are being performed to evaluate the extent of soot accumulation on electrical equipment and to clean, if necessary. The underground electrical cleaning is about 30% complete. Five electrical distribution panels were cleaned and power restored for lights and some receptacles in the north maintenance shop. Power is now back on to Underground Services Offices at S-550 and to the Conex at the Salt Shaft Station. Cleaning of some underground switch stations is ongoing.

b. Ventilation

- Air Flow—The underground ventilation system is currently operating in filtration mode using one 860 fan that supplies a nominal flow rate of 60,000 standard cubic feet per minute to the underground. Preventive maintenance was performed on the 860B fan and was placed online on November 5, 2014.
- Roof Bolting—The number of pieces of diesel equipment that can be operated for

WIPP Nitrate Salt Bearing Waste Container Isolation Plan Implementation Update

November 20, 2014

roof bolting will be limited by the available ventilation in the work area and the minimum ventilation flow rate assigned to each piece of equipment based on Mine Safety and Health Administration air quality requirements. Due to limited ventilation airflow, ventilation adjustments will have to be made as a prerequisite in each location where bolting equipment will operate to ensure equipment airflow.

c. Stage Needed Materials in Underground

- Bulkheads for the initial closure of Panel 6 are fabricated and are located in the underground. No additional staging of materials is currently underway.

Document Preparation

a. Work Planning

- Revisions to work planning documents to address Panel 6 initial closure activities are in progress.

b. Safety Basis Documents

- Safety basis documents that support safety basis authorizations for Panel 6 initial closure activities are undergoing review.

Summary - Information Requests/Status

None to date.