



U.S. Department of Energy
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WIPP Announces Schedule Changes for Resumption of Operations

While the WIPP recovery program continues to make significant progress, the original target date of March 2016 for resuming waste emplacement operations is no longer viable due to a variety of unanticipated issues. Over the past several months a number of additional activities have been identified that need to be added to the project schedule, including safety related activities that are required to be completed prior to resumption of operation.

Key issues impacting the recovery schedule include the need to address the findings and recommendations from the Accident Investigation Boards, implement DOE's more rigorous standards for site specific Documented Safety Analyses, and resolve problems with the contractor's oversight of the procurement and quality assurance processes for the manufacture and delivery of the Interim Ventilation System. The Department is actively engaged with the contractor to address these issues.

"We are disappointed that we will not meet the original target date for beginning waste emplacement, but do not want to lose sight of the substantial progress that has been made in the recovery of the WIPP site, including great strides in mine stabilization, radiological risk mitigation and the closure of Panel 6 and Panel 7 Room 7, all of which have significantly increased safety in the underground," said Acting Carlsbad Field Office Manager Dana Bryson.

The Department recently completed a review of all WIPP recovery activities to determine if there were efficiencies that could be found to safely maintain the current schedule. Following that review, it was determined that the schedule for resuming operations must be updated. The Department is in the process of addressing these issues and anticipates having a revised cost and schedule plan this fall.

"The Department is committed to resuming operations at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant as soon as it is safe to do so. In light of the safety-related activities that must be completed before waste emplacement begins, a new target date for the re-start of waste emplacement operations in 2016 must be established. We will continue to keep the public informed about our recovery activities," said Bryson.



Next WIPP Town Hall Meeting Scheduled August 6

The City of Carlsbad and DOE will co-host their monthly Town Hall meeting featuring updates on WIPP recovery activities on August 6 at 5:30 p.m. Location: Carlsbad City Council Chambers, 101 N. Halagueno Street. Live streaming of the meeting can be seen at <http://new.livestream.com/rrv/>.