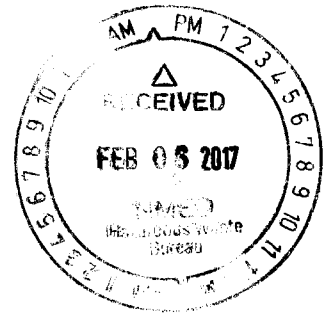


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The Department of Energy (DOE) has submitted a class 3 permit modification request to the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) for an outdoor nuclear waste storage pad at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP). Such storage would increase the amount of waste allowed on the surface by more than 10 times!

This is what I believe is wrong with this request: Federal law makes WIPP an underground disposal site, and not for surface storage. Because waste containers would be handled at least three times more than in the past, exposures to radiation and toxic chemicals would increase. More surface storage has not been needed for WIPP's underground operations for 15 years and is not needed now. Expanding WIPP to allow high-level waste has long been a DOE goal. The surface storage pad is similar to what could be used for high-level waste. High-level waste transportation and storage would endanger people throughout New Mexico and dozens of other states.

Please **deny this request** in order to protect public health and the environment.

Sincerely, *Patricia M. Golden*

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