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Mr. Ricardo Maestas
New Mexico Environment Department
Hazardous Waste Bureau
2905 Rodeo Park Drive E, Building 1
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505
Via email to: ricardo.maestas@state.nm.us

Re: Public Comment concerning proposed WIPP expansion by “Volume Reporting” and changing waste measurement

Dear Mr. Maestas:

I am deeply concerned about the proposed nearly 30% expansion of the amount of waste disposed of in the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) based upon a change in the way the containers are measured. For that reason, I hereby register my opposition to the proposed new definitions for the *TRU Mixed Waste Volume* that uses “the gross internal volume of the outermost disposal container” and to the *Land Withdrawal Act TRU Waste Volume* that uses “the volume of TRU waste inside a disposed container.”

In close to two decades of operating history, the DOE shipped a rather large number of dunnage drums. These containers were not filled to capacity. Allowing the proposed expansion increases the amount of highly radioactive and dangerous material on New Mexico’s highways that form the WIPP route, exposes people who stand nearby or live near idling trucks that haul to WIPP, and generally increases the occupational and public health and safety and environment risks to all New Mexicans. Significantly, during its operational life to date, the WIPP project does not have the kind of safety record that warrants gambling on the increased risks to workers and the public that occur by increasing the volume of radioactive waste shipped and stored there.

The New Mexico Environment Department should deny the request because DOE and Nuclear Waste Partnership, LLC, have not justified expanding the amount of waste being disposed of at the WIPP. Moreover, this proposal appears to be an attempt to increase the amount of waste stored in the WIPP beyond what Congress intended when it allowed the licensing of this facility.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Sincerely,

/s/ Jonathan M. Block

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