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15 October 2019  
(VIA eMAIL)

New Mexico Environment Department (NMED)  
Attention: Ricardo Maestas  
Building 1  
2095 Rodeo Park Drive  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505

Via email: [Ricardo.Maestas@state.nm.us](mailto:Ricardo.Maestas@state.nm.us)

RE: Waste Isolation Pilot Project (WIPP)  
Class 3 Excavation of a New Shaft and Associated Connecting Drifts

To whom it may Concern:

This letter is written to express First Roswell Company's (FRC) opposition to the WIPP permit modification request for a new shaft and associated drifts.

The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) is urged to deny the request.

Personally I have followed WIPP for more than 40 years and participated in the original siting hearings and expressed opposition at that time. While serving as Mayor of the City of Roswell, my brother, Senator Timothy Z, Jennings, personally met United States Secretary of Energy Hazel O'Leary to express sincere opposition to WIPP.

During those hearings Senator Pete V. Domenici, Senator Jeff Bingaman and Representative Joseph R. Skeen each assured local residents and the State of New Mexico the WIPP site would never be expanded in scope, operation, length of operation nor ever store any type of high level nuclear waste.

The proposed fifth shaft was not included in the original siting plan and has never been required for the facility to accomplish storage of nuclear waste at WIPP. The Department of Energy (DOE) now proposing an additional new shaft to the underground disposal area is obviously and notoriously to expand its scope to both increase the amount and types of waste that it accommodate, including high-level waste, commercial waste from the East Coast and surplus plutonium.

Reportedly the DOE now refuses to even acknowledge expansion of the scope to increase the amount and types of waste that it receive and store in violation of the promise to the public at the time of siting process. Frankly promises have been broken.

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The DOE having not disclosed the intended purpose of the new shaft is deceitful to area residents, State of New Mexico and in violation of operating with an open window to government.

First Roswell Company owns oil and gas properties located on the boundaries and proximate to the WIPP site. Several years ago I witnessed the "Valentine's Day" accident and WIPP release nuclear radiation to the surface and vicinity. WIPP is sited in the middle of the Permian Basin petroleum province that produces petroleum in vast quantities. Production from this area is vital to the local economies, the financial well-being of the State of New Mexico and security and energy independence of the United States of America.

To allow expansion of the WIPP scope and to include storage of high level nuclear waste is not in the best interest of New Mexico and the United States. New Mexico never agreed that WIPP could operate forever, so the NMED should use its legal authority under the Permit to stop the new shaft. The DOE promised NOT to expand the amount of defense waste stored at WIPP and it should honor those promises and the law.

On behalf of First Roswell Company and personally thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in regard to the proposed WIPP expansion. Hopefully these and other comments will be provided careful consideration for not only this petroleum company working in the Permian Basin, but also for area residents, our children and future generations.

Respectfully

Thomas E. Jennings  
President

Thomas E. Jennings,  
Individually

FRC/TEJ.ms

eC Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham

CORR WIPP 2019.10.15