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DALE JANWAY
 MAYOR

JOHN N. LOWE
 CITY ADMINISTRATOR

July 16, 2020

To: Ricardo Maestas, WIPP Project Manager
Ricardo.maestas@state.nm.us

Dear Mr. Maestas: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Class 3 Permit Modification Request entitled *Excavation of a New Shaft and Associated Connecting Drifts*. We support the New Mexico Environment Department's intent to approve this modification, as it is in the interest of WIPP's employees and of the project.

Members of the Carlsbad community have been active with the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant since well before WIPP opened. Recently, that includes participating in the pre-submittal meetings on this project in 2017, in which the state decided to split the Permanent Ventilation System into two projects – the proposed utility shaft and the new filter building. We also participated in the September 17, 2019, public meeting and appreciate the opportunity to remain informed.

WIPP's primary justification for this modification is increased control of the ventilation airflow in the underground and the ability to perform multiple operations at once. The men and women working in the WIPP underground are my top priority, and they have told me they support this project. The comments made by dissenters is that this shaft, if approved, will also be used to expand the facility's footprint. WIPP does not have a restriction on its footprint as long as it is confined to the 16 square miles of withdrawn land. This is not a relevant reason for rejection. However, WIPP would have the right to request additional disposal panels, following the present permitting procedure. The NMED is right not to apply speculation to its permitting process.

Finally, we believe the NMED has done an exceptional job with presenting relevant information to the public about this permit modification, despite the COVID-19 crisis. There has been no impediment to opportunities for public input or information. We encourage the NMED to promptly move forward with this permitting process.

Sincerely,

Carlsbad Mayor Dale Janway

John Heaton, Chairman of the Mayor's WIPP Task Force

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