

From: [Maestas, Ricardo, NMENV](#)
To: [McLean, Megan, NMENV](#); [Biswell, David, NMENV](#)
Subject: FW: [EXT] PUBLIC NOTICE No. 20-03 - New Shaft at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant
Date: Tuesday, August 11, 2020 4:57:17 PM

From: mary burton riseley <info@sg.actionnetwork.org>
Sent: Tuesday, August 11, 2020 4:55 PM
To: Maestas, Ricardo, NMENV <Ricardo.Maestas@state.nm.us>
Subject: [EXT] PUBLIC NOTICE No. 20-03 - New Shaft at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant

Ricardo Maestas,

Dear Mr. Maestas:

I object to the proposed permit modification that would allow construction of a new shaft and associated drifts (tunnels) into the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) underground. I also object to the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) authorizing the construction of the shaft seven weeks before the draft permit was issued. It is clear there is no emergency requiring NMED to issue a temporary authorization for shaft construction. In fact, the New Filter Building will provide over 100% of the air required for the workers in the partially contaminated WIPP facility in the next year or so.

The new shaft actually is for new underground rooms that could more than double the disposal area because the existing, permitted panels will be filled in a few years.

The new shaft is all about expanding WIPP for more waste, including:

high-level radioactive waste from Hanford, Washington and other sites;
weapons-grade plutonium from the Savannah River Site in South Carolina;
commercial waste from West Valley, New York; and
50 years or more of waste from building new nuclear weapons.

In 1999 and before, the Department of Energy (DOE) promised the People of New Mexico that WIPP would operate for 25 years and then close. DOE said they could cleanup the plutonium wastes around the nuclear weapons complex and get it to WIPP in 25 years. Despite these promises DOE says now it needs to keep WIPP open FOREVER.

The current permit requires WIPP to close in 2024. It's time for NMED to support the promises DOE made to the People of New Mexico for closure of WIPP in 2024. The new shaft must be stopped. NMED must withdraw the temporary authorization to build the shaft and deny the modification request.

Thank you for your careful consideration of my comments,

mary burton riseley
mbriseley@gmail.com

Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505