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STATE OF NEW MEXICO

ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION GROUP

P.O. BOX 968
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO 87503
(505) 827-8280

February 24, 1987

The Honorable Joseph R. Skeen
Member, U. S. Congress
1007 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Attention: Mr. Robert Lamina

Dear Representative Skeen:

Confirming our telephone conversation yesterday, the following suggestions are provided for the proposed land withdrawal legislation. These suggestions are limited to those pertinent to EEG's concerns with public health and safety and environmental degradation.

1) Mining is banned within the area of the site.

(Currently DOE has established a temporary ban on mining at the WIPP site and DOE has committed to reexamine the need to continue the ban shortly before decommissioning occurs. It does not make sense for DOE to commit to an elaborate borehole plugging and sealing program within the site and then allow commercial mining for potash within the site with shafts and tunnels 500' above the waste horizon).

2. The Dept. will not leave any residual salt on the surface at the WIPP site at the conclusion of the project.

(It is estimated that 1.2 million tons of salt will be left over at the conclusion of the Project and DOE should be required to clean up the site and dispose of this salt in an environmentally acceptable manner).

3. Within one year of the passage of the Act, the Department will publish their plans to administer the site using active institutional controls and passive controls. The plan should include the length of time active control will be maintained, methods to prevent mining, plans for permanent markers and the duration and scope of post closure monitoring.



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4. The mission of the WIPP project should be restricted to the permanent disposal of transuranic wastes and temporary storage for experimental purposes of a limited amount of defense high level waste.

(This mission restriction is consistent with the 1981 Stipulated Agreement between DOE and the State of New Mexico and with the 1984 Modification to that Agreement. Furthermore, the site has not been characterized for the disposal of high level wastes.)

Sincerely yours,

Robert H. Neill RHC
Robert H. Neill
Director

RHN:mlk