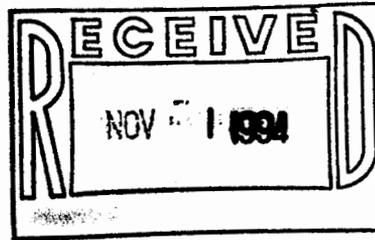


U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
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STAKEHOLDERS VOICE OPINIONS CONCERNING REVISED PERMIT FOR THE WIPP

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M., October 28, 1994 -- Stakeholders and citizens learned how the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) plans to revise a permit application in which the DOE seeks state approval to dispose of radioactive and hazardous mixed waste at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) near Carlsbad.

"There were some important points brought up in discussion," said George Dials, manager of the DOE's Carlsbad Area Office, which operates the WIPP. "These kinds of discussions are vital in helping us reach a disposal decision in 1998. We want to encourage stakeholders to attend these meetings, listen to the discussion and offer comments."

Department officials from the Carlsbad Area Office explained the revised Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Part B permit application to those attending. Changes in the permit application are necessary because the DOE decided Oct. 21, 1993, to abandon underground tests at the WIPP using radioactive and hazardous-mixed waste. Instead, those tests are being conducted at national laboratories.

A RCRA permit is one of three regulatory approvals needed to begin disposal activities at the WIPP. Other required approvals include a No Migration Determination and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) certification of compliance with long-term disposal regulations.

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**Stakeholders Voice Opinions Concerning
Revised Permit For The WIPP**

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Under RCRA, the state of New Mexico has authority to issue permits for management of hazardous wastes, including mixed wastes with both hazardous and radioactive components. Most of the radioactive waste identified for permanent disposal at the WIPP will contain small amounts of hazardous constituents such as lead and cleaning solvents.

By using a "phased submittal approach" DOE officials told meeting attendees that the revised RCRA permit application is scheduled to be submitted to the New Mexico Environment Department before May 31, 1995.

The evening event was held in conjunction with a separate meeting where more technical issues were discussed. Attendees represented various regulators, stakeholder groups and individuals including the New Mexico Environment Department, the Environmental Evaluation Group, Citizens for Alternatives to Radioactive Dumping, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the New Mexico Attorney General's Office.

Two additional public meetings are scheduled for Jan. 31 and March 23, 1995. Both events will be held in Carlsbad.

The WIPP is a proposed waste repository under the direction of the Carlsbad Area Office. Located in southeastern New Mexico, the facility is designed to demonstrate the safe, permanent disposal of defense generated transuranic radioactive waste in ancient salt beds 2,150 feet underground.

-DOE-

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