

Mr. J. Kirk Eby, Student
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Ithaca, NY 14850

February 26, 1995

Benito Garcia, Bureau Chief
Hazardous Waste Bureau
Dept. of Environment
P. O. Box 26110
Santa Fe, NM 87502

Dear Mr. Garcia,

I am writing to you to express my support for the Waste Isolation Pilot Project (WIPP) site in New Mexico. I was born in Eastern New Mexico, and lived there until coming to Cornell University for an education. In New Mexico, I opposed WIPP, primarily because I was not as informed about the project as I am now, and because it seemed like the only socially-acceptable opinion to have. As director of the Hazardous Waste Bureau of New Mexico, I'm sure you've heard most of the anti-WIPP voices and opinions, and perhaps feel that you must oppose WIPP primarily because of social or political reasons. I feel that you should hear the opinion of someone who actually supports WIPP, so you are able to make a more unbiased decision of whether or not to support the site. (I must admit, regrettably, that I do not actually know your position on this matter.) The following is a list of reasons of why I support the project.

1. Millions of dollars have already been invested in the project, and this money should not be wasted.
2. New Mexico produces high-level and low-level nuclear waste of its own, and should be responsible for disposing of all of it within its borders, even though by law it does not. (And even though the WIPP site is designed only for low-level waste.)
3. This is a great opportunity for New Mexico to show that it can be a leader in living up to environmental responsibility, rather than being looked upon as a good place for dumping waste. As Barry Commoner once said, "everything must go somewhere," and if it's not going back where it came from, then it's a clear case of passing the buck (and the ethical responsibility) to someone else.
4. Although there are questions about the integrity of the WIPP site, from a geological standpoint, I would much prefer that this waste was stored underground, rather than above ground, where I feel it can do much more harm to humans and the natural environment as a whole.
5. The completion of WIPP can be used as a strong argument against any future proposed sites in New Mexico, on the basis that each and every state has an ethical responsibility to dispose of the wastes it produces within its boundaries. New Mexico will have demonstrated that it willing to accept this moral responsibility.
6. New Mexico can require that WIPP be completed on its terms, rather than the federal government's. I propose the following terms to ensue WIPP's safety and success.

etc. - WIPP file



- A yearly federal waste research fund should be provided for the colleges and universities of New Mexico, to continually make the site safer and ensure its proper operation.
 - All safety issues must be resolved before the opening of WIPP.
 - New Mexico control (rather than federal control) over the project, including safety and transportation issues, should be required.
 - New Mexico residents, businesses, etc., should be given preferential hiring, to ensure a strong local involvement and commitment to the site.
7. Perhaps most important of all, New Mexico is one of the best places to begin the process of understanding how best to dispose of these wastes, since it has a relatively sparse population, vast areas of undeveloped land, a dry climate, and, in my opinion, a higher moral ethic than the rest of the nation because of its strong ties to and deep respect for the land.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "J. Kirk Eby". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

J. Kirk Eby

New Mexico Native