Dear WIPP Stakeholder:

The Carlsbad Area Office (CAO) is pleased to provide you with the enclosed Stakeholder Outreach Strategic Plan. It provides the vision to guide outreach and involvement activities the CAO plans to undertake in the next few years. We are also preparing a more detailed implementation plan to guide specific activities, so we ask you to look at this as a general roadmap rather than as a specific blueprint.

I would like to thank the many of you who provided comments on the draft of this plan. We have considered all of your comments and incorporated them wherever possible. We believe it is a better document as a result. If you have other insights you would like to share with us, please send them to me, or call me at (505) 234-7327. This plan is a dynamic document, and will be updated periodically as appropriate.

If you know of others who would like a copy of this plan, please ask them to call our WIPP Information Center at 1-800-336-WIPP (1-800-336-9477).

Sincerely,

Dennis Hurtt, Team Leader
Office of Intergovernmental and External Affairs

Enclosure
CARLSBAD AREA OFFICE
STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH STRATEGIC PLAN
MARCH 1995

FOREWORD

As the United States approaches the Twenty-first Century, it faces enormous challenges to its ability to resolve pervasive problems, many of which are the by-products of complex technologies used to meet national security needs. One of these problems, the cleanup and disposal of radioactive wastes, is the responsibility of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). The DOE Carlsbad Area Office is charged with solving one particular component of our country’s nuclear waste disposal problem: the disposal of defense transuranic waste and transuranic waste mixed with hazardous (non-radioactive) components, a topic of great concern to many Americans.

This Strategic Plan provides the Carlsbad Area Office’s response to that public concern by outlining how it plans to inform and involve those who are concerned about or may be affected by the Carlsbad Area Office’s activities. The DOE Headquarters Guidance on Implementation of the Department’s Public Participation Policy (July 29, 1994) and the DOE Environmental Management Public Participation Implementation Plan were used in developing this stakeholder outreach plan.

This plan, which is part of a three-tiered planning activity, identifies actions to be taken in the accomplishment of broad goals. The Carlsbad Area Office will develop activity and specific strategies for carrying out the actions identified herein in a follow-on document, the Carlsbad Area Office Stakeholder Outreach Implementation Plan (under preparation).

BACKGROUND

The Carlsbad Area Office, established in 1993 in Carlsbad, New Mexico, manages the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP), an underground disposal facility for defense-generated transuranic nuclear waste and mixed waste (hereafter referred to as transuranic waste). The Carlsbad Area Office also manages the National Transuranic Program Office, whose mission is to integrate and coordinate transuranic waste activities at 10 major and several small-quantity DOE sites across the country that have generated and/or store transuranic waste. In creating the Carlsbad Area Office, DOE took the following significant steps:

- Placed a senior manager in the field with authority and responsibility to carry out activities to support a Secretarial decision in January 1998 regarding waste disposal at WIPP;
• Charged the Carlsbad Area Office manager to concentrate on regulatory compliance;

• Cancelled the planned test phase involving tests utilizing radioactive materials at the WIPP, deciding to conduct necessary tests in laboratories instead; and

• Committed to greater public involvement in DOE’s decision-making processes.

The Carlsbad Area Office is guided by its Disposal Decision Plan, which charts regulatory, legal, experimental, site operations, transuranic waste integration, and public involvement milestones that must be accomplished to enable the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator to determine whether the WIPP complies with applicable regulations, and the Secretary of Energy to decide in January 1998 whether or not to use the facility for transuranic waste disposal. (See Attachment 1, the WIPP Disposal Decision Plan.) This Strategic Plan is tied to and supports the Disposal Decision Plan.

PURPOSE

In recent years, much of DOE’s operating environment has shifted from the secrecy required by the nuclear weapons program to emphasis on gaining the public trust in DOE’s activities and on public participation in its decision-making processes. The Carlsbad Area Office’s Stakeholder Outreach Strategic Plan supports this new paradigm. The plan is designed to:

• Highlight the key elements of the Carlsbad Area Office’s long-term outreach goals, strategies, and philosophies for informing and involving the public in Carlsbad Area Office programs;

• Define the scope of the Carlsbad Area Office’s stakeholder outreach programs;

• Provide a framework that fosters understanding and involvement between stakeholders and the Carlsbad Area Office.

The Carlsbad Area Office defines "stakeholder" broadly to include all individuals, organizations, and international and tribal nations that may be interested in, affected by, or charged by statute to regulate or oversee the WIPP or the National Transuranic Program.

CARLSBAD AREA OFFICE MISSION

The mission of the Carlsbad Area Office is to protect human health and the environment by opening and operating the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant for safe disposal of transuranic waste and by establishing an effective system for management of transuranic waste from generation to disposal.
OFFICE OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL & EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MISSION

The mission of the Office of Intergovernmental and External Affairs is to provide an effective two-way communication link between interested and affected stakeholders and the Carlsbad Area Office to foster greater understanding and meaningful involvement in achieving the Carlsbad Area Office mission and programs:

PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS

A decision to open WIPP encompasses more than technical and scientific concerns. In its decisions, the Carlsbad Area Office will strive for a balance among scientific/technical, regulatory, and political and public policy issues and concerns raised by local, national, institutional, tribal, and international stakeholders. In carrying out its mission, the Office of Intergovernmental and External Affairs:

- Functions as an integrated team that includes Carlsbad Area Office and contractor personnel.
- Assists and supports the planning, implementation and evaluation of public participation efforts of the National Transuranic Program Office and other programmatic public participation efforts that pertain to transuranic waste management.
- Facilitates timely regulator and oversight group access to Carlsbad Area Office documents and technical reports.
- Implements DOE Headquarters’ directives regarding stakeholder participation.
- Pursues vigorously, within available funding, programs identified in this plan.

THEMES

The following themes will be emphasized in the Carlsbad Area Office’s ongoing communications program:

- The safety of workers and the public, and the protection of environment. The Carlsbad Area Office operates in a safe and environmentally sound manner. The Carlsbad Area Office policy is to operate in compliance with all applicable environmental, safety, and health regulations and standards.
The WIPP as DOE's proposed solution for permanent disposal of transuranic waste from defense activities. The Carlsbad Area Office is working to establish a geologic repository for disposal of part of the nation's nuclear waste.

Commitment to operate in a cost-effective, results-oriented, safe and integrated manner.

Open communication with interested and affected stakeholders. The Carlsbad Area Office's goal is to enhance cooperation and understanding among all parties, and ensure stakeholders have opportunities for meaningful participation. Through stakeholder participation, the Carlsbad Area Office hopes to improve project management by having access to all relevant information in its decision making process.

The WIPP as an important national asset. It is a first step towards solving the nation's radioactive waste disposal problem. It also provides substantial direct economic benefit to the state of New Mexico.

SITUATION ANALYSIS

America's transuranic waste began accumulating in the 1940s with the beginning of the nation's nuclear weapons program. This waste comprises ordinary refuse and dried sludges that have been contaminated with synthetic by-products of the nuclear weapons program, primarily plutonium.

As early as the 1950s, the National Academy of Sciences recommended disposal of radioactive waste in stable geologic formations, such as deep salt beds. Government scientists searched for an appropriate site during the 1960s, testing the area of southeastern New Mexico in the 1970s. In 1979, Congress authorized the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP). The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) constructed the facility 26 miles east of Carlsbad, New Mexico, during the 1980s.

The WIPP Land Withdrawal Act which was passed in 1992 sets forth the regulatory framework in which the WIPP must operate. The act names the Environmental Protection Agency and the state of New Mexico Environment Department as WIPP's primary regulators. The project is now working toward showing compliance with regulations stated in the Act, including those of the Environmental Protection Agency, state of New Mexico, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Department of Labor, and Bureau of Mines.

The DOE created the Carlsbad Area Office in late 1993 to lead the nation's transuranic waste disposal efforts. In addition to operating the WIPP, the Carlsbad Area Office coordinates the transuranic waste program at waste-generating sites and at national laboratories.
In addition, the Carlsbad Area Office is actively implementing the DOE’s new openness initiative and is committed to responding to stakeholders’ concerns and helping them take a more active role in decision-making. Stakeholder concerns and needs are described below.

1. **Stakeholder issues could continue to delay or preclude the opening of the WIPP:**

   - **Concerns about the potential safety and environmental impacts that could result from the geologic disposal of radioactive waste:**
     - deep geologic disposal of radioactive waste in New Mexico;
     - DOE’s scientific and technical approach;
     - government’s ability to predict the behavior of the disposal system for a 10,000 year period.

   - **Concerns about waste transportation accidents and the potential for release of radioactive and hazardous materials to the environment:**
     - emergency response capabilities and mitigation of transuranic waste transportation accidents.

   - **Concerns that the DOE will evade regulations:**
     - until recently DOE was self-regulating.

   - **Concerns that the DOE does not recognize tribal issues:**
     - transportation of waste across traditional grounds;
     - failure to respect cultural and religious practices;
     - failure to consult with tribes on issues that affect them;
     - lack of recognition of tribal sovereignty.

   - **Concerns about government inefficiency:**
     - $1.6 billion expenditure without receipt of any waste;
     - non responsiveness to stakeholder concerns;
     - insufficient weight given to individual citizens’ concerns.

   - **Concerns about nuclear proliferation:**
     - disposal capability could allow for continued weapons development and other uses of nuclear materials.

   - **Concerns about schedule:**
     - insufficient time to complete needed tests, analyze results, and apply them to the compliance process;
     - not enough time for document review;
     - prolonged studies resulting in ongoing delays in opening.
2. Public officials require current, accurate information to participate effectively in decisions affecting WIPP activities. These key decision makers must be responsive to the issues of their broad-based constituents and stakeholders.

3. Some potentially affected stakeholders have limited or no information about the WIPP; others do not see its relevance to their needs. Challenges for the Carlsbad Area Office include:

   - **Lack of public knowledge about the project.**
     - Knowledge of the WIPP outside New Mexico often limited or incorrect, even near generator sites and along the transportation corridors.

   - **Differing priorities.**
     - Transuranic waste not a high priority compared to other radioactive waste issues;
     - Site safety a concern for some stakeholders living near storage sites, especially those near large population areas.

GOALS, STRATEGIES AND SUCCESS INDICATORS

To achieve its goals, the Carlsbad Area Office will plan and implement programs that establish effective two-way communication and encourage meaningful participation.

The goals and strategies presented in this section highlight the Carlsbad Area Office’s outreach program though 1998. They include both on-going activities and initiatives. Some strategies will receive a higher priority than others due to funding constraints. DOE welcomes the suggestions of stakeholders and customers regarding strategies that best meet their information and involvement needs.

These goals and strategies are developed in greater detail in the *Carlsbad Area Office Stakeholder Outreach Implementation Plan* (under preparation) and in more detailed strategies as activities are undertaken.
### I. Neighboring Communities and New Mexico

A majority of the Carlsbad Area Office's most active stakeholders are in New Mexico, where they represent a range of viewpoints regarding WIPP. Some of the representative groupings include: the state of New Mexico, the host community, and other communities.

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<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Success Indicators</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Enhance cooperative relationships with state of New Mexico officials to better understand and respond to host state issues.</td>
<td>1. Develop and implement a protocol for regular needs assessment and response to state concerns regarding the Carlsbad Area Office's interactions with the state.</td>
<td>1. DOE reaches a disposal decision with a) minimal or no procedural issues; and b) substantive issues have been considered by Carlsbad Area Office and discussed extensively with the state.</td>
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<td>2. Establish an &quot;envoy program&quot; between the Carlsbad Area Office and interested groups or individual stakeholders.</td>
<td>2. The Carlsbad Area Office's track record demonstrates early identification and addressing of issues.</td>
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<td>3. Periodically assess and modify existing briefing and tour programs to meet identified needs.</td>
<td>3. As indicated by informal followup with officials, the modified programs meet these officials' information needs and resolve outstanding issues.</td>
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<td>4. Respond to requests for information by members of the New Mexico legislature.</td>
<td>4. Carlsbad Area Office meets information needs.</td>
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<td>B. Improve relationships with key New Mexico communities.</td>
<td>1. Encourage more technology transfer opportunities.</td>
<td>1. &quot;WIPP partnerships&quot; with related industries are established in the state.</td>
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<td>2. Establish an &quot;envoy program&quot; with leaders in neighboring and concerned communities.</td>
<td>2. Outstanding issues with these communities decline.</td>
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<td>3. Expand educational outreach to key communities.</td>
<td>3. Carlsbad Area Office educational support increases, and understanding of the WIPP improves.</td>
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<td>4. Hold public awareness meetings to hear and address citizen concerns.</td>
<td>4. Interested stakeholders attend public awareness meetings and receive a fair hearing of their concerns.</td>
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<td>5. Assist neighboring communities with focused economic development initiatives.</td>
<td>5. Neighboring communities' economies diversify.</td>
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<td>7. Provide community-based news media with comprehensive project information and initiate regular information update sessions.</td>
<td>7. Coverage by community-based news media improves.</td>
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<td>8. Periodically evaluate and enhance existing news media, tour, speakers bureau, and public information programs.</td>
<td>8. Program improvements reflect and meet information and involvement needs.</td>
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<td>C. Enhance relationships with host community leaders, and build relationships with other community and minority interests.</td>
<td>1. Assist host community leaders in building partnerships with generator site communities.</td>
<td>1. Communication network between host communities and generator site communities focuses on shared interests.</td>
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<td>2. Increase participation with Carlsbad Department of Development to enhance community projects.</td>
<td>2. Cooperative relationship results in successful Department of Development projects.</td>
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<td>3. Identify and better inform interested and potentially affected minority populations and establish relationships that encourage full participation.</td>
<td>3. Active and informed participation in Carlsbad Area Office-related activities results in enhanced environmental equity.</td>
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<td>D. Develop and enhance relationships with DOE and other federal offices in New Mexico to improve coordination on shared issues, including land use management, transportation, waste management, public health and safety, and environmental protection.</td>
<td>1. Coordinate outreach activities with other DOE offices and national laboratories in New Mexico.</td>
<td>1. New working relationships are established; potential schedule conflicts are reduced; other offices and labs understand and support Carlsbad Area Office mission.</td>
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<td>2. Identify shared issues and establish cooperative relationships with New Mexico offices of other (non-DOE) federal agencies.</td>
<td>2. Regular communication is established. Potential miscommunications are avoided.</td>
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II. Nationwide Program

Many goals and strategies for the New Mexico program will be used in the nationwide program. The additional goals and strategies below address specific national needs, particularly at generator sites and along the transportation corridor.

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<td>E. Optimize Carlsbad Area Office’s outreach program through cooperative relationships with DOE Headquarters.</td>
<td>1. Seek active DOE Headquarters support for and participation in Carlsbad Area Office outreach activities.</td>
<td>1. Headquarters Offices of Public Accountability and Public and Consumer Affairs support Carlsbad Area Office’s goals.</td>
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</table>
| F. Team with other DOE offices to expand interactions with key public officials in the generator/storage and the transportation corridor states to increase information about and understanding of CAO programs. | 1. Develop and implement an outreach program:  
  - understand public opinions and information needs;  
  - quantify attitudes and awareness about WIPP;  
  - develop strategies and priorities;  
  - provide information; and  
  - increase participation.  
  2. Communicate with public officials and other stakeholders at generator sites and on transportation corridors through newsletter and other vehicles.  
  3. Implement targeted site tour program.  
  4. Provide briefings and speakers bureau presentations to officials and key stakeholders. | 1. CAO successfully teams with key generator site offices and improves relationships with associated public officials and stakeholders so that they develop a better understanding of CAO mission and goals. |
<p>|                                                                      | 2. Key public officials and other stakeholders in generator states and on transportation corridors gain enhanced understanding of Carlsbad Area Office mission. | 3. Site tours for public officials and other stakeholders increase. |
|                                                                      | 4. Key stakeholders demonstrate greater understanding of Carlsbad Area Office issues. |  |</p>
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| G. Improve working relationships with key special interest groups. | 1. Establish an "envoy program" with key groups and individuals for:  
   - early issue identification;  
   - resolution of issues; and  
   - prompt information exchange.  
   2. Conduct periodic meetings:  
      - elicit concerns and ideas on ways to improve communication and participation;  
      - respond to issues;  
      - encourage participation in decision-making process.  
   3. Make appropriate CAO representatives available to discuss key issues in depth.  
   4. Provide increased opportunities for site tours. | 1. Working relationships improve.  
   2. CAO identifies and addresses these issues as they occur.  
   3. Dialogue enhances mutual understandings.  
   4. WIPP site tours by key interest groups increase. |
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| H. Encourage and facilitate broad stakeholder participation in planning and decision-making processes. | 1. Establish processes to:  
- assess needs regularly;  
- make system more user friendly;  
- acknowledge and respond to concerns;  
- incorporate stakeholder input into documents and decisions;  
- provide feedback on Carlsbad Area Office's response;  
- invite and encourage media coverage.  
2. Explore advisability of citizens' advisory initiative. | 1. Carlsbad Area Office establishes documented track record of consistent, responsive interactions with interested stakeholders.  
2. Management makes decision on initiative. |
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<tr>
<td>1. Ensure two-way communication between Carlsbad Area Office and stakeholders.</td>
<td>1. Improve document distribution policy to facilitate public access.</td>
<td>1. Repeat requests for the same information are eliminated; response time is improved.</td>
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<td>2. Implement training to improve Carlsbad Area Office's listening, presentation, conflict resolution, media relations, and other communication skills.</td>
<td>2. Key Carlsbad Area Office staff and contractors use new communication skills, and Carlsbad Area Office communications with interested stakeholders improves.</td>
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<td>3. Implement toll-free information line 1-800-336-WIPP.</td>
<td>3. CAO achieves greater responsiveness and consistency as stakeholders use toll-free line to obtain routine information and answers to common questions.</td>
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<td>4. Establish a Carlsbad Area Office Public Information Center in Carlsbad to provide local document services and to evaluate and support the reading room program. Coordinate information accessibility with DOE Headquarters Environmental Management Information Center</td>
<td>4. Carlsbad Area Office Public Information Center is established; and reading room program is improved.</td>
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<td>5. Enhance exhibit program to increase public knowledge of the Carlsbad Area Office mission.</td>
<td>5. Exhibits along transportation routes and other key locations increase knowledge of WIPP.</td>
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III. Institutional Programs

Institutional programs focus on tribal governments, government consortia (such as the Western Governors’ Association and the Southern States Energy Board), and state agreements (including emergency response). Many of the goals and strategies identified earlier for improved communication and participation will be applied to the Institutional Programs. Additional strategies follow.

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| J. Enhance Carlsbad Area Office staff awareness of concerns, needs, and cultural practices of the sovereign tribal nations. | 1. Provide training to include:  
• recognition of existing intergovernmental relationships;  
• treaties and federal Indian law;  
• customs and practices;  
• activities to improve interactions and increase effectiveness with tribal governments;  
• tribal history;  
• tribal issues related to the WIPP. | 1. Interactions focus on resolution of substantive issues; and there are no complaints that the Carlsbad Area Office does not respect tribal sovereignty and culture. |
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| K. Increase awareness and future support among institutional and tribal groups of the Carlsbad Area Office mission and value. | 1. Develop and implement an educational program designed to communicate effectively with tribal audiences.  
2. Assess and respond to needs and concerns of tribal governments and institutions.  
3. Develop and implement a program of visits and briefings for tribal governments and institutions.  
4. Implement an "envoy program" with key points of contact among tribes and institutions.  
5. Enhance information value of transportation emergency response exercises as a source of WIPP information for affected communities.  
6. Foster cooperative relationships with DOE Headquarters, the Albuquerque Operations Office, and the generator sites regarding tribal information and involvement activities. | 1. Tribes and institutions demonstrate increased awareness of the Carlsbad Area Office mission.  
2. Carlsbad Area Office successfully negotiates tribal and state agreements, as needed.  
3. Understanding of Carlsbad Area Office mission increases among tribal governments and institutions.  
4. Working relationships with tribal and institutional leaders improve.  
5. Emergency responders, media, local officials, and residents in communities where exercises are conducted gain a better understanding of Carlsbad Area Office mission.  
6. Activities regarding tribal involvement goals of Headquarters, the Albuquerque Operations Office, the generator sites, and those of Carlsbad Area Office are mutually supportive. |
IV. International Programs

The Carlsbad Area Office believes radioactive waste managers worldwide have much to share. Several of the stakeholder outreach goals and strategies presented in earlier sections (such as identification of shared concerns and the expanded tour program) can be applied to this international effort. The primary goal and strategies follow.

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| L. Foster international exchange and support for the Carlsbad Area Office mission. | 1. Develop opportunities for cooperative communication and information exchange with international organizations and country-specific programs; coordinate existing exchanges by WIPP contractors.  
2. Gather, coordinate, analyze, and apply relevant information about international geologic repository programs and stakeholder outreach activities.  
3. Coordinate with international efforts at DOE Headquarters.  
4. Encourage international media to cover WIPP issues and foster international recognition of project. | 1. A network of key organizations is established.  
2. Exchange and support opportunities are coordinated for maximum value.  
3. Headquarters and Carlsbad Area Office efforts are coordinated and mutually supportive.  
4. International coverage of U.S. and waste management programs increases. |

**UPDATING THE PLAN**

This document represents the Carlsbad Area Office’s long-range strategy and approach to stakeholder involvement. Because the CAO is dynamic and the future will be different than we envision it now, the plan represents a work in progress. It will be reviewed annually and revised to reflect future needs based upon changes in our operating environment. All such reviews and revisions will be conducted in consultation with Carlsbad Area Office stakeholders.
ATTACHMENT 2
STAKEHOLDER AUDIENCES

Local, national, tribal, institutional, and international stakeholders have interests in and concerns about the process by which WIPP decisions are made and the impacts of those decisions. Key stakeholder audiences are listed below.

External

Regulators
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- New Mexico Environment Department
- U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
- U.S. Mine Safety and Health Administration
- U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration
- U.S. Department of Energy
- U.S. Bureau of Mines
- New Mexico Bureau of Mines
- New Mexico Energy, Minerals & Natural Resources Department

Oversight and other scientific groups
- National Academy of Sciences Committee on the WIPP
- New Mexico Environmental Evaluation Group
- Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board

Public officials and other government agencies
- The New Mexico Radioactive Waste Consultation Task Force
- The New Mexico State Legislature;
- New Mexico Joint Interim Radioactive and Hazardous Materials Committee
- Members of Congress, governors, mayors, and other federal, state, and local officials
- The office of the New Mexico Attorney General
- Other government agencies

Sovereign tribal governments
- Individual tribes and pueblos
- National Council of American Indians
- Council of Energy Resource Tribes
- Other tribal organizations
Interested groups and individuals

- Host community
- Neighboring and concerned communities in New Mexico
- Communities near the generator sites and along the transportation corridors
- Civic, service, professional and business organizations
- Academic community
- Special interest groups
- General public

Institutional

- State of New Mexico
- State government consortia
  - Western Governors’ Association
  - Southern States Energy Board
  - Western Interstate Energy Board
- Council of State Governments

International Nuclear Waste Community

- International agencies
- Government agencies
- Academic institutions

Internal

- DOE Headquarters
- Other DOE offices
- Employees
- Families
- Contractors
- Subcontractors
- Consultants
- Generator/storage sites
- Unions
- Retirees