



**Department of Energy**

Washington, DC 20585

September 18, 1998

*To Beate  
Hewitt*

Mr. Peter Maggiore  
Secretary  
State of New Mexico  
Environment Department  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502-0110



Dear Mr. Maggiore:

On behalf of Secretary Richardson, I am responding to your September 16, 1998, letter requesting a meeting to discuss the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP). As we discussed earlier today, I would be pleased to host such a meeting in the very near future. Accordingly, my office has contacted your office to set up a mutually agreeable meeting here at DOE Headquarters.

I want to assure you that Secretary Richardson and the entire Department remain steadfastly committed to opening WIPP. To the extent the September 12, 1998, Albuquerque Journal article entitled "Richardson Undecided on WIPP Shipments" may have left a different impression, that article was in error. Prompt opening of WIPP is vital to the Department's cleanup efforts across the nation.

I look forward to our meeting in the very near future.

Sincerely,

James M. Owendoff  
Acting Assistant Secretary for  
Environmental Management

