



**Department of Energy**

Carlsbad Area Office  
P. O. Box 3090  
Carlsbad, New Mexico 88221

November 18, 1999

ENTERED



Mr. John Kieling, Hazardous Waste Permits Program Manager  
Hazardous and Radioactive Materials Bureau  
New Mexico Environment Department  
P.O. Box 26110  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502-6110

Dear Mr. Kieling:

Subject: Notification of Planned Physical Alterations or Additions to the WIPP Facility

This letter provides notification of planned physical alterations or additions to the WIPP facility in accordance with Module I.E.11.a of the WIPP Hazardous Waste Facility Permit, Permit Number: NM4890139088-TSDF and 20 NMAC 4.1.900 (incorporating 40 CFR §270.30(l)(1)).

Table 1, provided as an attachment to this letter, contains a brief description of each alteration/addition planned for the Remote-Handled (RH) Bay in the WIPP Waste Handling Building. The planned changes are being implemented to serve the following purposes:

- Increase the efficiency of the RH-waste receipt and transfer to the underground hazardous waste disposal unit.
- Improve safety to workers, by reducing mechanical hazards and reducing the potential for radiation exposure.
- Improve structural reliability of the waste handling equipment.

The Permittees plan to request a modification to the WIPP's Hazardous Waste Facility Permit in July 2000 to remove the prohibition on management, storage, and disposal of RH waste. The modification request will include detailed facility design descriptions and drawings of the modified portions of the Waste Handling Building.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr Inés R. Triay, CAO Manager  
U. S. Department of Energy

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J. L. Epstein, General Manager  
Westinghouse Waste Isolation Division

Attachment



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**Table 1 - Additions and Alterations to the RH Bay of the Waste Handling Building**

Change Description	Reason for Change
Addition of 25-ton overhead crane in the Cask Unloading Room	A bridge and trolley crane equipped with a special Road Cask Lifting Yoke will be added to move the RH 72B Road Cask between the Road Cask Transfer Car and the Transfer Cell Shuttle Car.
Installation of floor port and valve in Cask Unloading Room floor	The new floor opening will provide the connection between the Cask Unloading Room and the Transfer Cell that allows bypassing the Hot Cell. Removing the Hot Cell from the RH waste handling process will eliminate three lifts of the RH canister. This will reduce the potential for contamination spread in the event of a contaminated canister, and will increase the rate at which RH Casks can be returned to the TRU waste complex.
Alteration of the Transfer Shuttle Car in the Transfer Cell	The Transfer Cell Shuttle Car is being modified to enable it to move RH Road Casks between the Cask Unloading Room and the Cask Loading Room. Minor changes are also needed to the shuttle car drive system to accommodate the casks and to improve the reliability and accuracy of positioning the casks at the various process stations.
Replacement of Facility Cask Rotating Fixture	The ceiling-mounted Facility Cask Rotating Fixture will be replaced with an independently-powered Facility Cask Rotating Device. This will improve the safety of the cask rotation operation.
Addition of road cask interface equipment	Road cask interface equipment is being added for use with the RH 72B Road Cask. The road cask interface equipment includes equipment needed to remove, handle and store the impact limiters, inner and outer lids, and the cask itself.
Replacement of road cask access platform	To clear the path for the Road Cask in the Cask Unloading Room, a portion of the existing access platform in this area will be removed. The remaining section of the platform will provide access for crane maintenance.
Alteration of the Road Cask Transfer Car	The upright A-frame structure of the Road Cask Transfer Car will be replaced to accommodate the RH 72B cask. The existing platform on the Road Cask Transfer Car will be removed as part of this adaptation. A separate mezzanine area straddling the Road Cask Transfer Car rails outside Cask Unloading Room will provide access to the top of the cask for cask preparations. These modifications give safer unrestricted access to the car for cask loading and unloading.
Alteration of the Cask Maintenance Mezzanine	A new road cask maintenance stand will be provided in the area of the existing Cask Maintenance Mezzanine for road cask maintenance beyond routine unloading operations. Additional decking will be provided to bridge the gap between the existing mezzanine and the top of the road cask.