

Greetings to Mr. Maestas!

I agree with the New Mexico Environment Department's recent proposed changes to the draft Permit for the New Mexico Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, a version of which was originally presented in 1999 and has been modified over the years, as you know, and is due to be renewed with further changes, again this year, 2023.

It is very discouraging to have the Department of Energy be considering extending the operations at WIPP until 2050 and onward, with the assumption that there will be more mining of waste panels. And the fact that much of the future capacity would be created to hold future radioactive waste from the expanded plutonium pit (bomb core) production is alarming since this signals the obvious: we are witnessing a shift in intent, aren't we? WIPP will not be honoring its original goal which was to help with clean up. I do not agree with this shift, which I suspect was at the back of some minds years ago. This is so disappointing!

I visited the salt beds many years ago, down near Carlsbad, when the digging began, and it was fascinating to travel down, down into the solid pink salt — beautiful. I have a small 6" bore of pink salt from there and I can lick it and taste something special. Thinking of the kinds of waste being put in there now and the new extension of time and the more terrible waste being contemplated in the future, coming from many parts of our country, is more than disappointing. It seems a betrayal.

Please read the changes, ideas and conditions that NMED has put forward; I do not need to repeat them here. I repeat: I am in solid agreement with them.

Sincerely yours,  
Elizabeth West  
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505-984-1047.