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As a Carlsbad resident, it is apparent that NMED cares more about opinions of people far away from WIPP and not about those closest. It is also apparent from the public comments and NMED edits to the Draft Permit that NMED has failed to perform its role in education of the public and the function/role of the Department. NMED has a critical function in the implementation of the resource conservation act and hazardous waste act to ensure the proper management, treatment, storage, and disposal of non-radioactive hazardous/toxic wastes, many of which pose a much greater risk to human health and the environment than the radioactive components that drive disposal at WIPP. The resource conservation act and hazardous waste act include limitations on the powers of the NMED along with the obligations of other parties to a hazardous waste permit. The resource conservation act and hazardous waste act do not include requirements that NMED has added to the draft hazardous waste permit, such as, inviting specific members of society to meetings or traffic safety standards or regulation of plutonium/radiation or require permittees to develop new business location(s).

It is apparent that NMED uses public fear of radiation to increase public opposition that allows NMED greater influence over clean-up actions at Los Alamos, Sandia, Idaho, Hanford, Oak Ridge, and Savannah River. The DOE environmental clean-up is a critical component of ongoing efforts to improve the health and safety of all citizens of our country. The threat to close WIPP has a huge impact to that ongoing effort, not just at large sites like Idaho and Savannah River, but also here in New Mexico.

The commenters demonstrate this lack of education with comments requesting closure of WIPP to protect them from Plutonium without consideration of the impacts from failure to cleanup past actions or the hazards posed to them by the chemicals they have in their own homes, vehicles, and neighborhoods.

Additionally, a number of commenters indicated that New Mexico should not accept any radioactive waste from other states, but fails to recognize the volumes of radioactive and hazardous waste generated in New Mexico that are sent to other states for treatment/disposal. The safe transportation, management, treatment, and disposal of all wastes is critical to the health and safety of our nation and should be the responsibility of every citizen of the State and Nation. WIPP is one of many critical infrastructure systems in place to protect us from the chemicals that would cause harm, and as such should be permitted, approved, authorized, and certified under the appropriate authorities for each. Overlap in these authorities must be avoided to prevent inconsistent or unimplementable requirements that could lead to any violation of these.