

## Al Baione

The Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) closure date should not be a fixed date requiring extension, but rather the closure of WIPP should be based upon WIPP reaching it's capacity. Reasons in favor of this position are as follows:

- \* the Federal Government has invested considerable public taxpayer funding in developing the WIPP site;
- \* the state has derived significant financial benefits from WIPP's operation, as has its citizens in terms of employment opportunities, taxes from worker salaries, and infrastructure improvements;
- \* Federal Government (i.e., taxpayer) investment will not be fully realized unless WIPP operates to its capacity. Realizing the full benefit of these investments was a precondition of initial Federal approval;
- \* WIPP's operation isolates radioactive waste from the environment and poses no credible risk of any significant release of this material which could affect the public or environment; and
- \* Tying WIPPs operation to it's capacity limit eliminates the recurring effort and uncertainty associated with adjusting a closure date.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide my thoughts.