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Depositing radioactive waste in the WIPP facility may be the safest storage we currently have for this type of radioactive waste. However, we know that the storage of radioactive waste has significant associated hazards. The site only recently opened after being shut down due to leakage of the radioactive material. This will happen again. As a healthcare worker, I can tell you that no one in the small communities surrounding the WIPP site has sufficient skills to contain a serious leak. A major leak will result in the loss of lives. We know that this will happen, as I mentioned there has already been sufficient leakage to shut the facility down for years.

Sending materials that are more dangerous than currently being stored there will certainly increase the risk to everyone in Carlsbad, NM and surrounding areas. Actually the risk to people much further away will also be increased.

Changes to the types of materials shipped through NM and stored in WIPP should not be allowed. Doing so will ultimately risk lives as well as increasing risk of long term pollution to the lands and to the health of citizens of the state of New Mexico.