



May 26, 2026

Hon. James Kenney  
Secretary  
New Mexico Environment Department  
Harold Runnels Building  
1190 St. Francis Dr. Suite N4050  
Santa Fe, NM 87505

***RE: WIPP is Critical to Environmental Cleanup, and Restricting Shipments is Detrimental to the Local, State and National Cleanup Mission***

On behalf of SRS Community Reuse Organization and its Board of Directors, I am writing to express our concern that the draft permit modification for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) issued by the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) will slow down and endanger cleanup progress in Savannah River Site region and at EM sites across the country.<sup>1</sup>

The last permit by NMED modified less than two (2) years ago addressed the key issues and prioritized legacy waste while ensuring that WIPP could operate efficiently. The 2024 permit seems to be working well and was touted by NMED as “successful negotiations”<sup>2</sup> and “a Legacy TRU Waste Disposal Plan” was introduced into the permit to define the term “legacy waste” and to work with generator/storage sites and stakeholders to accurately inventory this waste once defined. In addition, Panel 12 will be reserved for legacy waste to the extent practicable.

WIPP is a critical national asset and vital to South Carolina and the cleanup at the Savannah River Site. WIPP is the nation’s only deep geologic repository for defense-related TRU waste, making it the linchpin for all cleanup efforts across the entire EM complex. Its continued operation and accessibility to sites across the nation are critical. The facility’s mission is crucial, its success is a matter of record, and its continued operation – in alignment with the original submission – is essential to our nation’s ability to move forward with cleaning up every site across the complex and fulfilling the legal and moral obligations to the nation’s frontline cleanup communities, including Los Alamos. The WIPP facility has assisted in the remediation of 22 DOE sites of legacy TRU waste since operations began.

It is important to continue and accelerate shipping TRU waste from Los Alamos National Laboratory as well as Idaho, Washington, Nevada, California, Tennessee, South Carolina, Illinois and other sites. Modifications restricting WIPP’s ability to accept shipments from across the EM complex could weaken WIPP’s operations and threaten jobs at WIPP. Reducing shipments to

---

<sup>1</sup> On April 23, NMED issued a Public Notice announcing a Draft Permit to modify the permit for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant. <https://hwbdocs.env.nm.gov/Waste%20Isolation%20Pilot%20Plant/260419>.

<sup>2</sup> See NMED presentation, <https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/RHMC%20091324%20Item%202%20WIPP%20Update%20NMED.pdf>

WIPP could have a negative impact on the WIPP facility, potentially disrupting WIPP's operations, to the detriment of EM sites across the country and their neighboring communities.

The current permit is new (2024) and adequately addresses the prioritization of legacy waste across the country and helps to address national environmental cleanup and security concerns. We request that NMED continues to work with communities and local governments under the current permit for WIPP.

We plan to ask our State to look at the impact of the proposed changes to the WIPP permit to tell us the impact on cleanup at our site and other sites around the Country.

If you have any questions, please contact Robbie Bennett at [Robbie.bennett@srsro.org](mailto:Robbie.bennett@srsro.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robbie Bennett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "R" and "B".

Cc: The Honorable Lindsey Graham, U.S. Senate  
The Honorable Tim Scott, U.S. Senate  
The Honorable Raphael Warnock, U.S. Senate  
The Honorable Jon Ossoff, U.S. Senate  
The Honorable Joe Wilson, U.S. House of Representatives  
The Honorable Jim Clyburn, U.S. House of Representatives  
The Honorable Rick Allen, U.S. House of Representatives  
The Honorable Christopher Wright, Secretary of Energy  
Seth Kirshenberg, ECA Executive Director  
ECA Board of Directors  
SRSCRO Board of Directors



May 28, 2026

A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING THE CRITICAL ROLE OF THE WASTE ISOLATION PILOT PLANT (WIPP) IN THE CLEANUP OF SAVANNAH RIVER SITE and THE NATION'S NATIONAL DEFENSE SITES; AND THAT THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO'S PROPOSED RESTRICTION OF SHIPMENTS TO WIPP WILL SLOW THE CLEANUP OF SAVANNAH RIVER SITE

WHEREAS, The SRS Community Reuse Organization supports the success and safety of the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP); and

WHEREAS, The SRS Community Reuse Organization recognizes WIPP is the only facility of its kind in the nation and plays a critical role in the cleanup of Savannah River Site and

WHEREAS, The SRS Community Reuse Organization has always valued and supported the acceleration of waste shipments from Savannah River Site, as across the complex; and

WHEREAS, the State of New Mexico has accepted the WIPP mission and has played a critical role in the Nation's environmental cleanup and our Nation's Defense; and

WHEREAS, the WIPP facility has assisted in the remediation of 22 DOE sites of legacy transuranic (TRU) waste since operations began; and

WHEREAS, The SRS Community Reuse Organization views the Permit Modification proposed by the New Mexico Environmental Department (NMED) may directly impact the cleanup of Savannah River Site

WHEREAS, in the last permit modification at WIPP two (2) years ago Panel 12 at WIPP will be reserved for legacy TRU-waste from around the country to the extent practicable; and

WHEREAS, NEMD's proposed delay in mining operations in order to maintain Panel 12 for TRU waste from one site and not all DOE sites is likely cost-prohibitive and a possible safety concern during delays; and

WHEREAS, communities surrounding DOE sites including the SRS Community Reuse Organization are concerned about the impacts of the proposed Permit Modification on community, workforce and environmental safety and protection.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY The SRS Community Reuse Organization, AS FOLLOWS:

Public health and environmental protection are paramount to the success of DOE's cleanup program and trust between local, state, and federal governments. The safe operation of all DOE facilities is a top priority for local governments.

The last permit by NMED modified less than two (2) years ago addressed the key issues and prioritized legacy waste while ensuring that WIPP could operate efficiently. The 2024 permit was touted by NMED as "successful negotiations" and "a Legacy TRU Waste Disposal Plan" was introduced into the permit to define the term "legacy waste" and to work with generator/storage sites and stakeholders to accurately inventory this waste once defined.

There is currently enough space at WIPP for allowing all of the waste at DOE facilities and it would ultimately be detrimental to the entire EM complex to prioritize waste at Los Alamos which may not be ready to ship, thereby delaying cleanup at Savannah River Site.

The SRS Community Reuse Organization encourages NMED to reconsider the necessity and effectiveness of the proposed Permit Modification.

The SRS Community Reuse Organization encourages NMED to explore alternative, more effective options to accelerate waste cleanup at Los Alamos, such as increasing characterization in safe, responsible, and reliable manner and working with DOE to prioritize preparing Los Alamos TRU shipments.

The SRS Community Reuse Organization encourages NMED to open discussions with DOE and South Carolina to not slow or stop waste from being shipped to WIPP.

The SRS Community Reuse Organization encourages NMED to continue to work with local communities, including Los Alamos County and the City of Carlsbad, under the current permit for WIPP.