

New Mexico Environment Department
Hazardous Waste Bureau
2905 Rodeo Park Drive East, Building 1
Santa Fe, NM 87505

RE: Public Comment on Proposed WIPP Permit Modification

To Whom It May Concern:

As the statewide association representing more than 100 economic development professionals, communities, and business leaders across New Mexico, New Mexico IDEA is deeply concerned about the broader economic implications of the proposed permit modification for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP).

New Mexico IDEA is focused on strengthening New Mexico's economic competitiveness and supporting policies that encourage investment, job creation, and long-term economic growth. From that perspective, we believe this proposal raises significant concerns about New Mexico's investment climate and economic stability.

WIPP is not just a local employer or a southeastern New Mexico issue. It is one of the most important federal assets in our state and a major economic driver that supports jobs, federal investment, contractors, and supply chain activity across New Mexico. The facility has helped position New Mexico as a reliable partner for complex national security and infrastructure missions while bringing consistent federal dollars and long-term economic stability into our state.

The concern from an economic development standpoint is straightforward: policies that create operational uncertainty around major assets like WIPP can have consequences far beyond the facility itself.

This proposed modification risks slowing a federally funded mission that generates substantial and sustained economic activity for New Mexico. It introduces uncertainty around long-term operations and planning, which is one of the fastest ways to discourage future investment and weaken confidence among federal partners and site selectors evaluating New Mexico for future projects.

New Mexico has worked hard to strengthen its reputation as a place where major federal initiatives and large-scale projects can succeed. Economic development depends on stability, predictability, and confidence in long-term operations. When policies appear to limit operational flexibility or create uncertainty around a nationally significant facility, it can send the wrong signal to investors, employers, and decision-makers considering New Mexico for future opportunities.

Bottom line: this is a policy decision that could unintentionally undercut one of the strongest economic drivers we have.

We fully recognize the importance of environmental stewardship and responsible oversight. However, we respectfully encourage the New Mexico Environment Department to carefully consider the broader economic implications of this proposal and continue working collaboratively with stakeholders to ensure WIPP remains operationally strong, reliable, and economically beneficial to New Mexico.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jason Espinoza', with a stylized, flowing script.

Jason Espinoza
Executive Director
New Mexico IDEA