

Cynthia Weehler

The Fire On The Mountain group supports all the permit modifications that the NMED has submitted.

1. The DOE has shown that it will never fulfill its agreements unless guided to do so. The modifications clearly and concisely give DOE the step-by-step instructions for how to fulfill its obligations. They allow NMED to measure and track DOE's progress, which the federal agency should have no problem completing since it has already agreed to prioritize the legacy waste at LANL.
2. NMED has also wisely set a penalty if DOE fails to deliver on its mission. It's unfortunate that DOE requires this, but past actions have shown that DOE is expert at avoiding taking action on the parts of a mission that require additional time and expense.

NMED has had to take this remedial action because the safety of New Mexico is in danger. By storing old, unidentified legacy waste from the Cold War for decades in the most unsafe conditions, DOE has shown it's incapable of taking the most basic protections for New Mexico's land, property, economy, and physical health. The waste sits in tents on a mesa in a known wildfire zone. One fire, and there have been many that invaded LANL property, would create a disaster that couldn't be recovered from. It hasn't happened yet. It can be avoided. NMED is taking the logical steps necessary to solve this problem before it becomes one that can't be solved.

Many people have written from the Carlsbad area and some even from other states. They cite their concerns that they will lose jobs and that this will hurt their economy. Someone is giving them bad information. The waste will keep coming; it will just be waste that puts New Mexicans in extreme danger. The problem hasn't been created by NMED or New Mexico, it's been created by DOE. Instead of complaining that this waste requires more effort and money to prepare for WIPP disposal, DOE needs to obtain the money it should have decades ago and complete the work it should have decades ago.

Residents in southeastern New Mexico, concerned about loss of jobs and economic health, would be wise to think about the areas in our state that would be far more devastated by a nuclear release in a wildfire. Vaporized plutonium spread by wildfire would be impossible to clean up (Sandia Labs). It would be uninhabitable for almost 500,000 years. People's homes couldn't be lived in, sold, and they can't be insured. Agriculture, ranching, recreation, mining...all these industries would be sacrificed for southeastern New Mexicans. That's why we support WIPP.

Citizens in Carlsbad are important, of course. Their jobs and well-being must be considered. Those of us supporting the modifications to this permit are PROPONENTS of WIPP. Had could we not be? It's needed to protect Americans from nuclear waste sitting in tents in a wildfire zone!

That's why the protests from the nuclear waste industry in southeastern New Mexico ring hollow. Imagine your quality of life in Eddy and Lea Counties if the taxes and revenue from all the industries in northern New Mexico were destroyed. Whoever is feeding the good people who depend on WIPP that they face loss of jobs is simply biased. Disaster in any part of our state hurts all of us.

We noticed one other concern about the comments coming from those who oppose the modifications to the WIPP permit: they are almost identical, many come from out-of-state, and one is dated May 16, 2026. As I write this today, it is May 8.

With the best intentions for every New Mexican,

Cynthia Weehler