New Mexico Nuclear Alliance (Scott Lopez)

Dear Cabinet Secretary Kenney and New Mexico Environment Department Staff,

On behalf of the New Mexico Nuclear Alliance, we respectfully submit these comments regarding the proposed Agency Initiated Modification (AIM) to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) Hazardous Waste Facility Permit.

The New Mexico Nuclear Alliance strongly supports the continued safe and efficient operation of WIPP and recognizes the critical role the facility plays in supporting national security, environmental cleanup, and the economy of southeastern New Mexico.

WIPP has long served as a cornerstone employer and economic driver for Carlsbad and surrounding communities. The facility supports thousands of high-quality jobs directly and indirectly, sustains local businesses, and provides long-term economic stability and investment across the region. The highly skilled workforce at WIPP has demonstrated an enduring commitment to safety, operational excellence, and responsible stewardship of defense-related waste.

We are concerned that the proposed permit modification could create operational uncertainty, slow waste shipments, and negatively impact workforce stability and future investment associated with WIPP operations. Maintaining a predictable and efficient operational framework is essential not only for the success of the nation's transuranic waste disposal mission, but also for preserving economic confidence in southeastern New Mexico communities that have supported this mission for decades.

Any actions that could unnecessarily disrupt shipment schedules or constrain operational flexibility may have broader (and unintended) consequences for regional employment, contractor activity, infrastructure investment, and the long-term economic outlook for Carlsbad, Southeastern New Mexico and nationally.

NMNA supports policies and regulatory approaches that ensure WIPP can continue fulfilling its mission safely, efficiently, and reliably while maintaining strong environmental oversight and regulatory compliance. We encourage NMED to carefully consider the potential economic and operational impacts of the proposed modification on the WIPP workforce, the surrounding communities, and New Mexico's broader energy and national security economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the AIM Draft Permit.

Sincerely,

Scott Lopez, CEO and President

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May 27, 2026

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