

Los Alamos County (Randall Ryti)

April 17, 2026

The Honorable James Kenney

Secretary of the New Mexico Environment Department Harold Runnels Building

1190 St. Francis Drive, Suite N4050 Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505

RE: WIPP is Critical to Environmental Cleanup in Los Alamos County and the Nation, and Restricting Shipments is Detrimental to the Local, State and National Cleanup Mission

Dear Secretary Kenney:

On behalf of the Los Alamos County Council, I am writing to express our continued support of the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant's (WIPP) critical mission, and to express concern over the New Mexico Environment Department's (NMED) planned action to modify WIPP's

Hazardous Waste Permit (Permit), potentially restricting shipments to WIPP vital to environmental cleanup at sites around the country and the operations of Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL).
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As the most impacted community, along with Santa Fe County, Carlsbad, Artesia, Eddy County, Lea

County and others, I believe that 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"² 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 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

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WIPP facility has assisted in the remediation of 22 DOE sites of legacy TRU waste since operations began.

For decades, Los Alamos County has lobbied for adequate funding to Los Alamos DOE-EM for Legacy TRU

Waste clean-up and remediation, and the future funding should be increased. It is important to prioritize and accelerate shipping TRU waste from LANL to WIPP. However, allowing shipments from

Idaho, Washington, Nevada, California, Tennessee, South Carolina, Illinois and other sites also remain critical. 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 WIPP could

have a negative impact on the WIPP facility, potentially impacting the jobs of fellow New Mexicans

and

disrupting WIPP's operations, to the detriment of all EM sites and their neighboring communities, including the County.

The current permit is new (2024) and adequately addresses the prioritization of legacy waste across the country and in Los Alamos. As hosts of the WIPP site, the State of New Mexico, the County,

and

the communities who neighbor WIPP are serving our country by helping to address national environmental cleanup and security concerns. The County requests that NMED continue to work under

the current permit for WIPP.

We look forward to a continued productive conversation, and we appreciate your recent meetings with

the County to discuss these important issues. If you have any questions, please contact me at randall.ryti@losalamosnm.gov.

Sincerely,

Randall Ryti Council Chair

Cc:

ECA Board of Directors

Seth Kirshenberg, Executive Director

Dr. Stanley Pyram, DOE-EM Los Alamos Field Office Manager Ted Wyka, NNSA Los Alamos Manager

Espanola Mayor, Dennis T. Salazar

Santa Fe County Commission Chair Justin Greene Carlsbad Mayor, Rick Lopez

Eddy County Commission Chair Sarah Cordova

Lea County Commission Chair Gary Eidson

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COUNTY COUNCIL

Randall Ryti

Council Chair

Ryn Herrmann

Council Vice Chair

COUNCILORS

Theresa Cull

Melanee Hand

Suzie Havemann

Beverly Neal-Clinton

David Reagor

COUNTY MANAGER

Anne W. Laurent

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As the most impacted community, along with Santa Fe County, Carlsbad, Artesia, Eddy County, Lea County and others, I believe that 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"² 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.

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¹ On February 11, NMED notified DOE that NMED plans to modify the WIPP Hazardous Waste Permit again because NMED believes that DOE failed to prioritize emplacement of transuranic (TRU) mixed waste shipments from the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) as required by the permit.

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

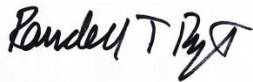
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For decades, Los Alamos County has lobbied for adequate funding to Los Alamos DOE-EM for Legacy TRU Waste clean-up and remediation, and the future funding should be increased. It is important to prioritize and accelerate shipping TRU waste from LANL to WIPP. However, allowing shipments from Idaho, Washington, Nevada, California, Tennessee, South Carolina, Illinois and other sites also remain critical. 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 WIPP could have a negative impact on the WIPP facility, potentially impacting the jobs of fellow New Mexicans and disrupting WIPP's operations, to the detriment of all EM sites and their neighboring communities, including the County.

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