



**June 22, 2026**

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

RE: Opposition to Proposed WIPP Permit Modifications

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Economic Development Corporation of Lea County (EDCLC), I am writing to express our **opposition** to the proposed permit modifications affecting the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP).

With more than 80 business entity members representing the full spectrum of commerce in Lea County — including manufacturing, construction, energy production, educational institutions, and retail — the EDCLC is dedicated to improving Lea County's economic condition and quality of life through business recruitment, retention, and expansion. We work daily with employers, investors, community leaders, educators, and government partners across Lea County and the broader Southeast New Mexico region to strengthen the economy and expand opportunity for the communities we serve.

Although WIPP is located in Eddy County, its economic influence does not stop at the county line. Lea County families, businesses, and communities are among those that rely on the facility every day. Many of the people who keep WIPP operating reside in Lea County. Skilled tradespeople, engineers, scientists, technicians, and contractors commute from Lea County to support the facility, and the wages they earn return to our communities — funding home purchases, retail spending, tax revenue for local schools, and the small businesses that depend on a healthy regional economy. For more than two decades, this steady source of well-paid employment has become an integral part of how Lea County's economy functions.

Beyond its local impact, WIPP serves a critical national purpose. As the nation's only deep geologic repository for defense-generated transuranic waste, WIPP plays an essential role in supporting the Department of Energy's environmental cleanup mission and helping fulfill federal obligations associated with decades of national defense activities.

The success of WIPP has helped position Southeast New Mexico — and Lea County in particular — as a nationally recognized center for nuclear operations, energy production, and mission-critical industry. That standing has had practical consequences for our region: a more diversified economy, a stronger workforce pipeline, deeper partnerships between employers and our educational and training institutions, and sustained federal investment that reaches communities well beyond the facility itself.



**For these reasons, EDCLC is concerned that the proposed permit modifications could negatively affect WIPP’s operational efficiency, mission execution, workforce stability, and long-term economic contribution to our region, including the many Lea County residents whose jobs depend on the facility’s continued operation.**

As an organization dedicated to advancing economic opportunity and competitiveness, EDCLC does not support permit modifications that could undermine the effectiveness of one of the region’s largest employers and most important economic drivers.

WIPP has become a model for how federal missions and local communities can work together to create economic opportunity, workforce development, environmental stewardship, and long-term prosperity. The focus should be on strengthening and supporting this nationally important asset — not creating unnecessary barriers to its continued success.

For these reasons, EDCLC opposes the proposed permit modifications.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jennifer Grassham'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Jennifer Grassham  
President & CEO  
Economic Development Corporation of Lea County