



June 17, 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 and Request for Public Hearing in Carlsbad, New Mexico

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Carlsbad Department of Development (CDOD), I am writing to express our **opposition to the proposed permit modifications affecting the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) and to respectfully request that a public hearing be held in Carlsbad, New Mexico.**

CDOD represents more than 80 local businesses and contracts with both the City of Carlsbad and Eddy County to provide economic development services focused on job creation, business expansion, workforce development, and long-term economic prosperity throughout Southeast New Mexico. As the region's economic development organization, we work daily with employers, investors, community leaders, educators, and government partners to strengthen the economy and improve opportunities for the communities we serve.

From that perspective, WIPP is one of the most important economic and strategic assets in Southeast New Mexico.

For more than two decades, WIPP has provided stable, high-paying careers, supported local businesses, strengthened workforce development initiatives, and generated substantial economic activity throughout our region. The facility supports thousands of direct and indirect jobs while creating opportunities for skilled trades, engineers, scientists, technicians, contractors, and small businesses across New Mexico.

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 allowed Carlsbad to become nationally recognized as a center for nuclear operations, environmental stewardship, and mission-critical industry. It has diversified our economy, strengthened our workforce, expanded educational partnerships, and generated significant federal investment that benefits not only Carlsbad and Eddy County, but communities across the state.

For these reasons, **CDOD 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.**

Policies that create operational uncertainty, limit flexibility, or reduce WIPP's ability to efficiently fulfill its federal mission have the potential to impact jobs, business investment, workforce retention, and future economic growth throughout Southeast New Mexico. They may also hinder the Department of Energy's ability to meet critical cleanup commitments at defense sites across the country.

As an organization dedicated to advancing economic opportunity and competitiveness, CDOD does not support permit modifications that could undermine the effectiveness of one of the region's largest employers and most important economic drivers. We believe WIPP's continued success depends on maintaining operational flexibility, mission certainty, and the ability to safely and efficiently carry out the federal responsibilities for which the facility was established.

Furthermore, because of the significance of these proposed changes and their potential impact on the host community, **CDOD respectfully requests that the New Mexico Environment Department conduct a public hearing in Carlsbad.**

Carlsbad is the host community for WIPP. The residents, businesses, workers, local governments, educational institutions, and stakeholders most directly affected by decisions impacting the facility are located here. A hearing conducted in Carlsbad would provide the most meaningful opportunity for participation by those who live and work alongside this facility every day and who possess firsthand knowledge of its operational, economic, and community impacts.

Simply put, if decisions are being considered that could affect WIPP's future operations and the economic well-being of the community that hosts it, the people of Carlsbad deserve the opportunity to provide input in their own community.

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, CDOD opposes the proposed permit modifications and respectfully requests that a public hearing be held in Carlsbad, New Mexico.

Sincerely,



Kristen Gamboa
Executive Director
Carlsbad Department of Development

