

# Peñasco Valley Telephone Coop. Inc. (Mitch Hibbard)

June 22, 2026

New Mexico Environment Department

Hazardous Waste Bureau

RE: Comments on Proposed WIPP Permit Modification

To Whom It May Concern,

Peñasco Valley Telephone Cooperative (PVT) serves rural communities across southeastern New Mexico, where WIPP is not only an important part of the national defense cleanup mission, but also a key driver of regional economic stability. We appreciate the opportunity to provide input on the proposed permit modification.

From PVT's perspective, WIPP's value is both national and local as it supports critical federal objectives while sustaining jobs, infrastructure investment, and long-term economic activity in our service area. Maintaining that balance is important to the communities we serve.

As we review the proposed changes, we believe it is important to preserve the operational framework that has allowed WIPP to function effectively and consistently.

Based on available information, WIPP also continues to have sufficient capacity to support its mission, with New Mexico-generated waste representing a relatively small portion of the remaining volume. Shipments appear to move forward based on readiness at generator sites, which allows for steady and predictable operations.

From a business and regional standpoint, predictability and throughput matter. WIPP's steady operations support high-quality jobs and consistent economic activity in southeastern New Mexico. Any changes that could limit shipment flexibility or reduce efficiency may have downstream impacts on the local workforce, supporting industries, and community development.

At the same time, WIPP's role as the nation's only deep geologic repository for defense-related transuranic waste makes its operational flexibility critical. Ensuring that it can continue to accept waste as it is generated and prepared helps maintain progress across multiple cleanup sites and avoids shifting delays or risks elsewhere in the system.

We also recognize WIPP's long-standing safety record, which provides confidence in its current operating approach and supports continued reliance on the facility as a central part of the national cleanup effort.

In closing, PVT supports an approach that maintains WIPP's operational efficiency, consistency with federal law, and ability to carry out its full mission. Policies that provide clarity, flexibility, and steady operations are not only important for national cleanup objectives, but also for the economic health and stability of the communities we serve.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mitch Hibbard

Chief Strategy & External Affairs Officer

Peñasco Valley Telephone Cooperative, Inc.