

Teresa Seamster

Rebuttal to the City of Carlsbad Resolution 2026-33

SUBJECT :

Consider Approval of Resolution 2026-33, a Resolution recognizing the critical role of the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) in the cleanup of National Defense Sites and acknowledging that the State of New Mexico's proposed restrictions on shipments to WIPP will slow the cleanup of the Nation's National Defense Sites

From residents who live within 1 mile of WIPP Route: US 285 South.

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The recent resolution from the City of Carlsbad overlooks the original mission of the WIPP site which was that it was a "pilot project" destined to be closed in 2024.

The failure of the US government to locate another waste disposal site made the decision to magnify this test site into the national radioactive waste disposal site, a top priority of a nuclear industry that has irresponsibly managed its waste for 50 years. The Los Alamos National Lab radioactive waste "management" is a prime case of "store – ignore – hope for no more accidents." (A quick review of the many accidents in both handling and storing radioactive material at LANL can provide a scary picture of the facility's poor safety record that NNSA is well aware of as are we as nearby residents.)

The open air storage of decades old waste in canisters under tents and down canyons is a catastrophe looming in the plume of the next wildfire that burns out of control and incinerates any of these unprotected areas.

The city of Carlsbad is not located in a densely inhabited area with a surrounding tinder-dry national forest on all sides and only 2 access roads descending a steep mesa to a narrow valley filled with pueblos along the Rio Grande, small towns like Espanola, Pojoaque and Tesuque, and a rapidly exploding population in Santa Fe. If an accident occurs at LANL, there is little chance of Carlsbad's population suffering from the fallout, while there is every possibility of devastating impacts on the entire ROI which includes multiple northern NM counties.

Carlsbad workers at the WIPP facility may have been misinformed about the volume of shipments being "curtailed" if "legacy waste" is prioritized from LANL, but the Resolution provides no evidence or history of that happening. Simply because a City Council states it has: "always valued and supported the acceleration of shipments from all national defense sites" is not a reason to try to overrule the expertise of the NM Environment Department in concluding that the RISK OF STORING A HUGE BACKLOG OF LEGACY RADIOACTIVE WASTE UNDER CURRENT CONDITIONS AT LANL IS UNACCEPTABLE AND THAT ITS REMOVAL SHOULD BE PRIORITIZED FOR THE PUBLIC SAFETY OF THE PEOPLE OF NEW MEXICO.

The Resolution goes on to itemize other national defense sites having to "wait" while Panel 12 is reserved for LANL waste, and being "cost-prohibitive" to the WIPP operators. Really? Is there no change in scheduling that could solve that problem? No way to ensure that "waste at Los Alamos

which may not be ready to ship" is also prioritized so it IS ready to ship?

There is little necessity for New Mexico to remain at high risk of widespread radioactive contamination simply because Carlsbad thinks prioritizing our shipments "may create national safety concerns due to shipping delays." These other national sites have been mismanaging their waste and sitting on their stored waste for decades. Waiting for LANL - the nation's first nuclear site - to be safely cleared of dangerously stored waste is not much of an ask.

We support NMED and encourage it to move ahead and implement the permit modification. And, also require Carlsbad employees to read information provided by their own state agency that is in charge of WIPP operations, and become better informed as to why the lives and health of all New Mexicans and our environment takes PRIORITY at WIPP.

Other states are getting a service none of them have been able to provide. Therefore, they should operate here with all due consideration for our well-being.
Please continue to put NM first.

In appreciation,
Teresa & Tom Seamster