

Stop “Forever WIPP” and Plutonium Transport

Radioactive and Hazardous
Materials Committee
November 15, 2024
Santa Fe, NM

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2023 WIPP Permit Agreed to by

- NMED
- DOE
- SIMCO
- Carlsbad Department of Development
- Citizens for Alternatives to Radioactive Dumping
- Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety
- Conservation Voters New Mexico
- Nuclear Watch New Mexico
- Southwest Alliance for a Safe Future
- Southwest Research and Information Center
- Steve Zappe

WIPP's Mission

- “Start Clean, Stay Clean” to dispose of up to 175,564 m³ of defense transuranic (TRU, plutonium-contaminated) waste
- Safely transport waste by truck through more than 20 states without serious accidents or releases
- Safely remove TRU waste from DOE sites
- Safely close, decontaminate, and decommission the WIPP site beginning in 2024 – *DOE wants 2083 or later*

Shipping Sites and Routes



Key New Provisions of Renewal Permit

- Priority disposal of New Mexico Cold War “Legacy Waste.” An annual certification that all LANL legacy waste can be disposed in existing permitted panels.
- A Legacy Waste Disposal Plan that reserves Panel 12 for such waste.
- Repository Annual Siting Report on progress for a repository in another state.

“Legacy Waste”

WIPP is to clean up Cold War “Legacy Waste.” So far, volume of waste from:

- Idaho National Lab, ID – 52.4%
- Savannah River Site, SC – 14.7%
- Rocky Flats, CO – 14.6%
- Los Alamos, NM – 10%
- Hanford, WA – 5%
- Oak Ridge, TN – 2%

“Legacy Waste”

Since July 2023, when DOE agreed to prioritize “legacy waste”:

- Idaho National Lab, ID – 85.4% (52.4%)
- Los Alamos, NM – 6% (10%)
- Savannah River Site, SC – 5% (14.7%)
- Oak Ridge, TN – 3% (2%)

On November 4, 2024, DOE submitted the “Legacy TRU Waste Disposal Plan”

Legacy TRU Waste Disposal Plan is not acceptable

“...down blended
plutonium waste...is
legacy waste.”

“...non-legacy
operations waste, such
as pit production job
control waste, will
continue being shipped
to WIPP.”

Legacy TRU Waste Disposal Plan

Legacy TRU Waste Disposal
Plan

November 2024



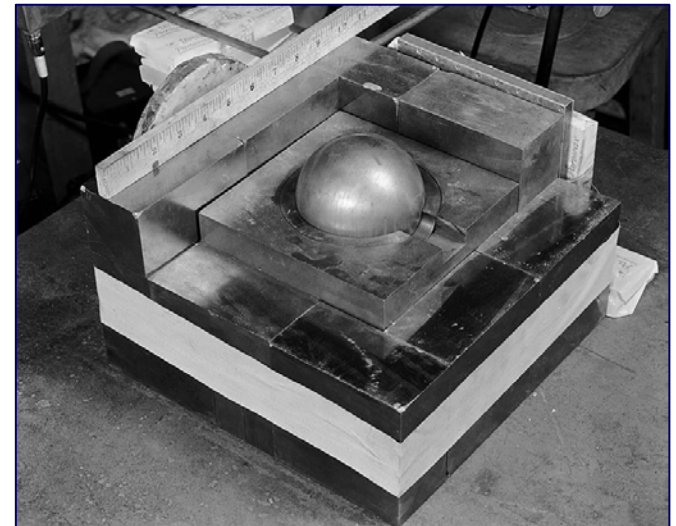
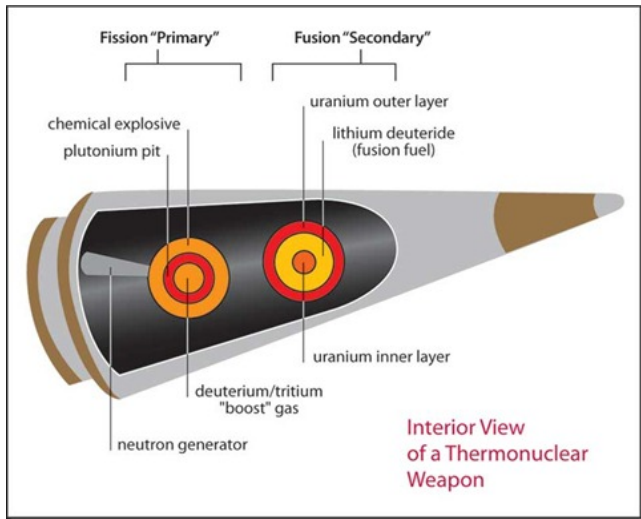
Prioritize LANL Legacy Waste

Early each year, DOE must certify to NMED that there is sufficient capacity in permitted panels to dispose of all NM waste and shall prioritize waste from LANL clean-up activities.

But the Legacy Plan states that legacy waste will be disposed in future panels. That could include LANL legacy waste.

Non-Legacy Waste: New Pits

DOE plans to produce 4,000 plutonium pits (and TRU waste) for new nuclear weapons during the next 60 years.



25% of the total waste volume in 2083

Non-Legacy Waste: “Surplus Plutonium”

DOE has more than **48 Metric Tons** of
“surplus plutonium”



41+% of total radioactivity by 2083

Non-Legacy Waste: High-level waste in tanks

Since 2004, the WIPP Permit has excluded waste “that has ever been managed as high-level waste and waste from tanks....”

The Plan includes such waste as “legacy TRU waste.”

Other repositories are necessary for legal and technical reasons

- WIPP 1979, 1992, 1996 laws
- Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 & 1987
- Future waste generation, as there is no policy to stop TRU waste production
- Reduce transportation risks and costs
- No state, including New Mexico, is willing to host the only repository
- By the end of 2024, DOE must submit the first “Repository Siting Annual Report.”

The Public Asks DOE to:

- Fully comply with the conditions of the 2023 Renewal Permit.
- Provide a comprehensive description of how WIPP would operate during its proposed 85-year lifetime, while complying with current legal limits.
- Cooperate with the State of New Mexico to plan and conduct a public engagement program to explain the WIPP expansion description and respond to comments.

The Public Asks the State to:

- Ensure that DOE fully complies with Permit requirements.
- Implement the public engagement program that regularly discuss progress of implementing an approved Legacy Waste Plan, including prioritizing LANL waste.
- Provide regular updates about the State's actions to ensure siting of a new TRU waste repository in another state.

Contact Information

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