

Speak Out Against More “Hot” Waste at WIPP

The Department of Energy (DOE) wants to bring more “hot” Remote-Handled (RH) transuranic (plutonium-contaminated or TRU) waste to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) without providing adequate justification and without an opportunity for a public hearing.

What are DOE’s Plans?

DOE has submitted a *Permit Modification Request - Addition of a Shielded Container* to the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) so that DOE can transport and dispose of RH waste in lead shielded containers. RH waste would continue to be shipped and disposed in large canisters in the walls of the underground rooms, as has been done since January 2007. If the NMED approves the request, RH waste in shielded containers could be trucked to WIPP and emplaced on the floor in the underground rooms along with Contact-Handled (CH) TRU waste.

What are concerns about shielded containers?

- The amount of RH waste shipped to WIPP, stored aboveground, and disposed underground would substantially increase.
- Contrary to what DOE says, shielded containers cannot be handled the same as CH waste. Shielded containers that are damaged or leaking might not be able to be placed in over-pack containers without exposing workers and the public.
- DOE also plans to use shielded containers for hotter commercial waste, expanding WIPP beyond its legal limit of 175,564 cubic meters of TRU waste.
- Shielded containers have never been used. NMED denied a similar request on January 31, 2012 because of public opposition and the inadequacies of the request.

What Can I Do?

Submit written comments to: Trais Kliphuis, NMED, 2905 Rodeo Park Drive East, Building 1, Santa Fe, NM 87505 by **September 10, 2012**.

Use the sample comments below, or write whatever you want.

Thank you!

Dear Trais Kliphuis:

I am very concerned about shielded containers. They would expand the space available at WIPP for remote-handled waste that is dangerous to transport, store, and dispose. Despite what the Department of Energy says, shielded containers could not be handled like contact-handled waste because damaged or leaking containers could be too radioactive to over-pack.

The shielded containers request once again is not a proper class 2 permit modification. I request a public hearing and that shielded containers be a class 3 modification so that there would be more extensive public comment and an opportunity for a hearing.

name _____

address _____

Trais Kliphuis
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