

# Stop “Forever WIPP”

Radioactive and Hazardous  
Materials Committee  
September 13, 2024  
Hobbs, NM

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Southwest Research and Information Center

# 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 m<sup>3</sup> of defense transuranic (TRU) 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



# “Legacy Waste”

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

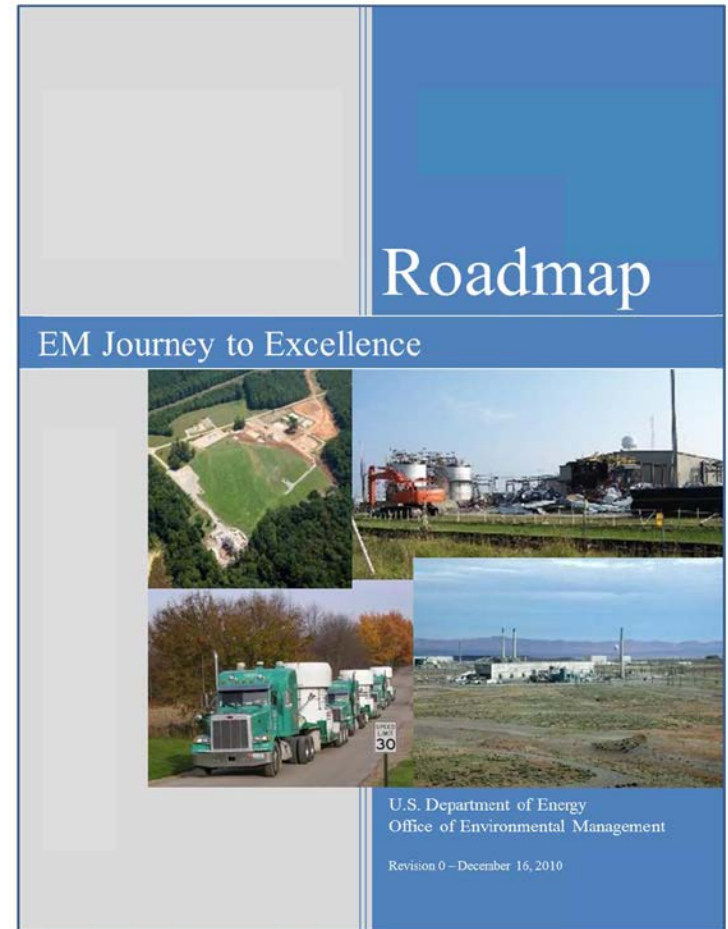
- Idaho National Lab, ID – 52%
- Savannah River Site, SC – 14.7%
- Rocky Flats, CO – 14.7%
- Los Alamos, NM – 10%
- Hanford, WA – 5%
- Oak Ridge, TN – 2%

By November 3, 2024, DOE must submit  
“Legacy TRU Waste Disposal Plan”

# Previous Legacy Waste Plan

“Complete disposition of 90 percent of the legacy transuranic waste by the end of 2015.”

WIPP M&O Contract in 2012: Contractor shall support and implement that goal “by the end of fiscal 2015.”

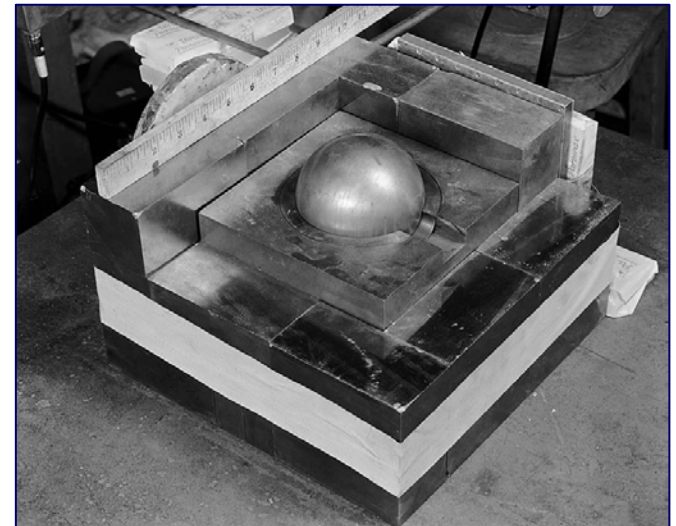
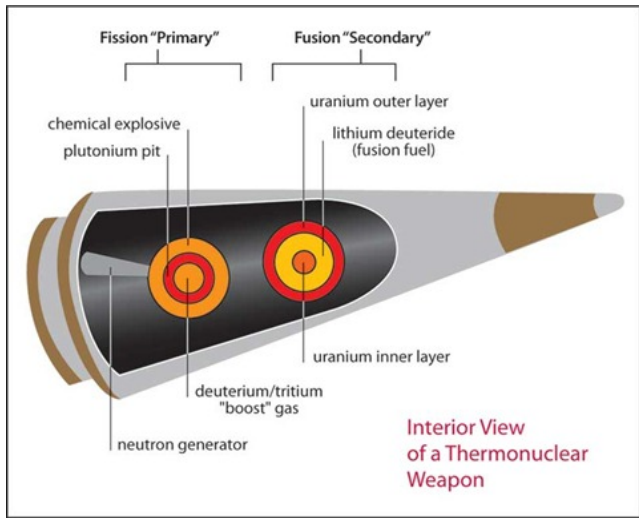


# Prioritize LANL Legacy Waste

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

# 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**

# 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
- In 2024, DOE must submit the first “Repository Siting Annual Report.”

If capacity limit increases or additional types of waste:

“The Secretary [of NMED] shall issue a notice of revocation and reissuance for cause within 30 calendar days”

## June 27, 2022 DOE to NMED

“Based on the potential category waste stream inventory estimates in the 2021 ATWIR, final facility closure could begin no earlier than CY 2083.”

## March 12, 2024 DOE to EPA

“The assumption for a final facility closure date of 2083 is derived from the latest date a generator site plans to generate TRU waste.”

# The 2083 date isn't credible

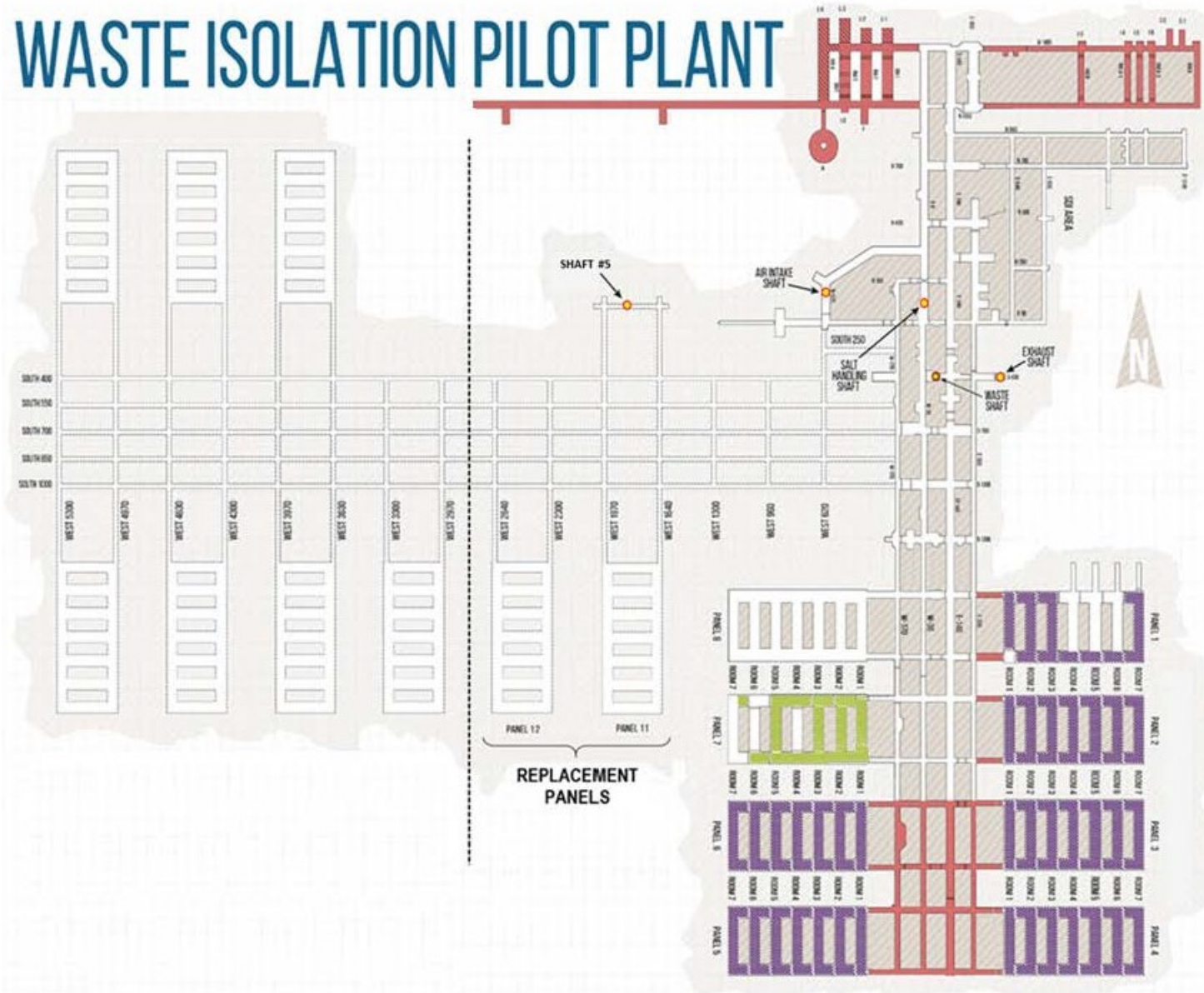
In **25 years** (1999 to March 30, 2024) WIPP emplaced **43%** of the volume capacity.

At that rate, WIPP would be at the volume capacity by **2057**.

At that rate, WIPP would be at **145%** of volume capacity **in 2083**.

# Doubling WIPP's Underground Capacity

## WASTE ISOLATION PILOT PLANT



# 19 Panels is not credible

- The original design (8 panels + 2 in drifts) was for the **full capacity in 25 years**.
- Panels normally fill up with waste in 30 to 36 months.
- 2025 to 2083 @ 3 years per panel would require **20 more panels**, more than twice the 9 panels DOE has described.
- 9 panels would mean **6-7 years to fill a panel**, which would result in major ground control problems.

# 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.

# Worker Contamination Claims

As of 9/9/2024

Combined Part B (Cancer) & E (Toxics)

	CLAIMS	CASES
Applications Filed	314	253 *
Total Compensation Paid	69	60
Total Dollars		\$8,697,500
Total Medical Bills Paid		<u>\$4,406,846</u>
Total Paid		<b>\$13,104,346</b>

\*Applications filed represent **142 unique workers**

# Worker Contamination Claims

As of 8/5/2018

Total Paid \$3,305,600

\*Applications filed represent 57 unique workers

As of 7/31/2022

Total Paid \$7,147,593

\*Applications filed represent 86 unique workers

**50% increase** in workers filing in 48 months

As of 9/9/2024

Total Paid \$13,104,346

\*Applications filed represent 142 unique workers

**65% increase** in workers filing in 25 months

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