

WIPP Project Plan Descriptions

- **Waste Characterization (LANL, SRS, Oak Ridge) Baseline Inspections**

EPA conducts baseline inspections at each TRU waste site and evaluates the site's waste characterization program for technical adequacy. EPA issues a Federal Register (FR) notice to notify the public of the proposed decision and docket the site-specific inspection report. The FR notice gives the duration of the comment period, which is typically 45 days for new sites. At the end of the comment period, EPA evaluates public comments before finalizing the approval. EPA sends a letter to DOE transmitting the approval decision and posts the final inspection report on the web.

Each baseline inspection entry includes time allotted for EPA-DOE response/resolution of specific issues, proposed approvals, the 45-day comment period, and incorporation of all resulting information into the final inspection reports.

- **Magnesium Oxide (MgO) Planned Change Request**

As part of EPA's WIPP Certification Decision in 1998, EPA required that the disposal facility include both natural and engineered barriers in order to ensure that repository releases would be within established regulatory limits. MgO was included as an engineered barrier in DOE's original Compliance Certification Application that was submitted in 1996. On April 10, 2006, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) submitted a planned change request reducing to the amount of MgO emplaced in the WIPP repository.

EPA has posted all documentation related to this issue on its website at:

<http://www.epa.gov/radiation/news/wipp-news.htm#MgO>

As noted in previous WIPP-NEWS listserv messages, EPA has been accepting comments on this issue since early June 2007. An informal comment period (30 working days) was recently opened on August 29, 2007. The comment period will end on October 11, 2007.

- **Transuranic (TRU) Waste Determination Process**

- In DOE's 2004 Compliance Recertification Application TRU waste inventory, DOE included some wastes from the tank farm in Hanford, WA. As part of the 2006 WIPP Recertification Decision, DOE committed to implement a process for evaluating whether Hanford tank waste, and possibly other wastes, meets the definition of TRU waste.

- DOE recently submitted a letter (2/22/08) updating the status of this issue. They propose to make determinations on whether waste meets the definition of TRU waste on an individual, waste stream-by-waste stream basis, supported by documentation. This process would solicit input and comment from both EPA and the public. DOE would also submit a permit modification application to the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED).

- For recertification purposes, the Hanford tank waste in question has been removed from the 2007 Annual TRU Waste Inventory Report. DOE is planning to include it in an additional appendix in the next Compliance Recertification Application (CRA), to be submitted in March 2009.