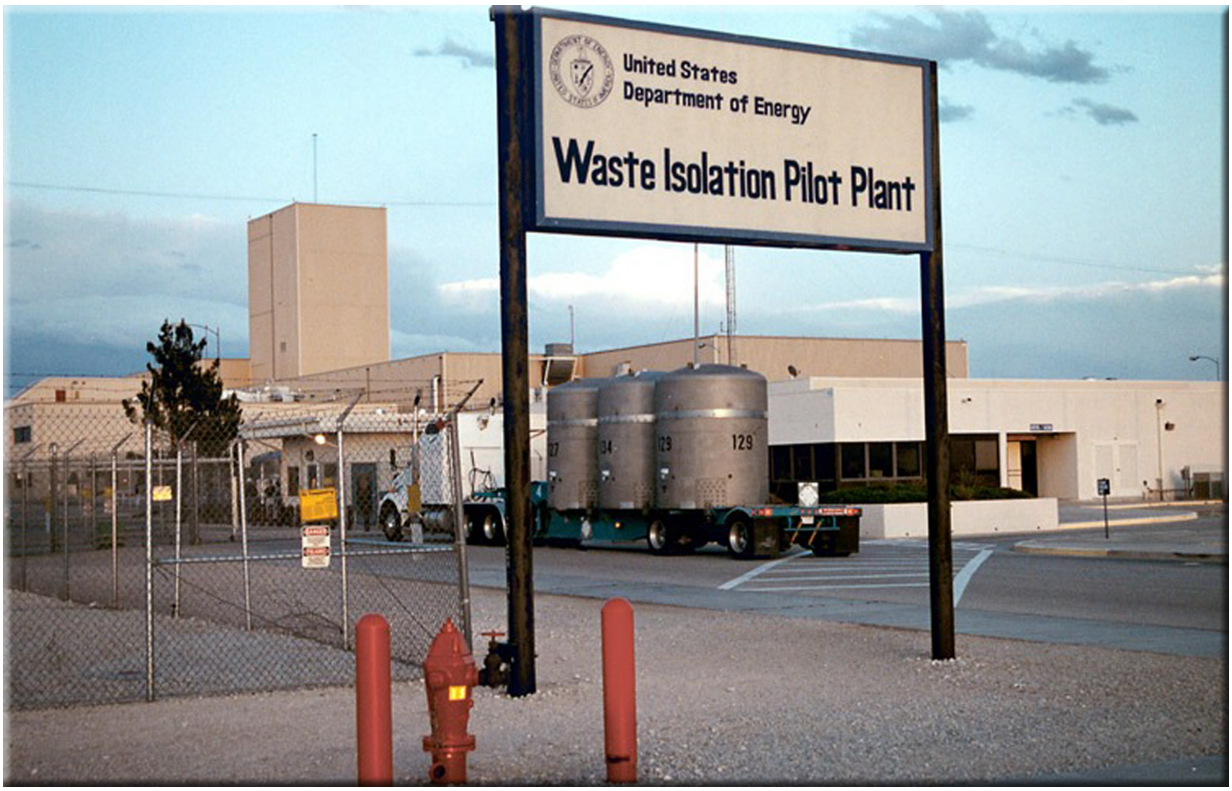
Surplus Plutonium Disposition Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SPD Supplemental EIS)



Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP)

The Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP), managed by the Carlsbad Field Office of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), is the world's first underground repository licensed to safely and permanently dispose of transuranic radioactive waste, or TRU waste, left over from the production of nuclear weapons. After more than 20 years of scientific study, public input, and regulatory struggles, WIPP began operations on March 26, 1999.

WIPP is located in the remote Chihuahuan Desert of southeastern New Mexico, about 26 miles southeast of Carlsbad. Its facilities include disposal rooms mined 2,150 feet underground in a 2,000-foot-thick salt formation that has been stable for more than 200 million years. TRU waste is currently stored at 23 locations nationwide. Over WIPP's life cycle, it is expected to receive about 37,000 shipments.

WIPP is being considered by DOE as a potential destination for a portion of the surplus non-pit plutonium currently in storage at the Savannah River Site (SRS). DOE would prepare and package this surplus non-pit plutonium at SRS for disposal as TRU waste at WIPP, provided that the material meets the WIPP waste acceptance criteria. The material considered for WIPP does not consist of weapons components that could be used in the creation of weapons. Shipments of similar plutonium-bearing materials were sent to WIPP for disposal from the Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site, Los Alamos National Laboratory, and Hanford Site.

As of July 12, 2010, WIPP had received 8,726 shipments of waste, including 1,110 from SRS. The National Academy of Sciences has termed the transportation system used for moving these wastes to WIPP as the "safest transportation system for hazardous materials in this country."

To Submit Comments or Request More Information:

Sachiko McAlhany, NEPA Document Manager
SPD Supplemental EIS
U.S. Department of Energy
P.O. Box 2324
Germantown, MD 20874-2324
Toll-Free Fax: 1-877-865-0277
Email: spdsupplementaleis@saic.com
http://www.spdsupplementaleis.com