

**STATE OF NEW MEXICO  
BEFORE THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY**

**IN THE MATTER OF  
HEARING DETERMINATION REQUEST  
CLASS 3 "EXCAVATION OF A NEW SHAFT  
AND ASSOCIATED CONNECTING DRIFTS"  
PERMIT MODIFICATION TO THE WIPP  
HAZARDOUS WASTE FACILITY PERMIT**

**Docket No. HWB 21-02**

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FINAL ORDER

This matter comes before the Secretary of Environment following the appointment of a hearing officer to conduct an evidentiary public hearing pursuant to NMSA 1978, Section 74-4-4.2 which commenced May 17, 2021, via the Zoom platform.

The Department of Energy and Nuclear Waste Partnership LLC, who own and operate the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant ("WIPP"), seek approval of a Class 3 Permit Modification Request ("PMR") to excavate and operate a new shaft and associated connecting drifts.

Located in Eddy County, New Mexico, WIPP is a facility authorized by Congress for the disposal of transuranic radioactive waste materials generated by atomic energy defense activities of the United States. As a result of a 2014 radiological underground release, portions of the WIPP facility and the existing surface-mounted ventilation exhaust systems were contaminated. Consequently, the WIPP facility ventilation system can accommodate only a small percentage of the original design airflow, and even with the addition of the New Filter Building, full scale mining is not possible. The addition of the new shaft and associated connecting drifts will upgrade the underground ventilation system and will restore


full-scale concurrent, unfiltered mining, maintenance, and continuously filtered waste emplacement operations as originally permitted.

The Hazardous Waste Bureau within the Resource Protection Division of the New Mexico Environment Department recommends approval of the PMR to enable the Permit to maintain the protection of human health and welfare and the environment. This recommendation is conditioned on Permittees' compliance with the applicable laws, rules and conditions of the Permit.

Having considered the administrative record, including all post-hearing submittals and the Hearing Officer's Report; and being otherwise fully advised regarding this matter; THE SECRETARY HEREBY ADOPTS THE HEARING OFFICER'S REPORT AND RECOMMENDED FINDINGS OF FACT AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED:

The Permit Modification Request for the excavation and operation of Shaft #5 and associated connecting drifts is hereby granted, and the Permit shall be issued by the Hazardous Waste Bureau in the form set forth in the Draft Permit, as shown in the Administrative Record.

 Digitally signed by  
James Kenney  
Date: 2021.10.27  
14:24:30 -06'00'

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JAMES C. KENNEY, Secretary of Environment

#### NOTICE OF RIGHT TO REVIEW

Pursuant to Section 74-4-14, NMSA 1978, any person who participated in this permitting action and who is adversely affected by the action may file a petition for hearing by the Environmental Improvement Board, c/o Pamela Jones, 1190 St. Francis Drive, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502. The petition shall be made in writing to the Board within thirty days from the date notice is given of this action.

## Certificate of Service

I hereby certify that on October 27, 2021 a copy of the foregoing **Final Order** was emailed to the persons listed below:

A copy will be mailed first class upon request.

Christal Weatherly  
Assistant General Counsel  
New Mexico Environment Department  
121 Tijeras Ave NE, Suite 1000  
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102  
(505) 222-9524

Chris Vigil  
Assistant General Counsel  
New Mexico Environment Department  
121 Tijeras Ave. NE, Ste. 1000  
Albuquerque, NM 87102  
Phone: (505) 383-2060  
Fax: (505) 383-2064  
Email: christopherj.vigil@state.nm.us

Megan McLean  
Environmental Scientist/Specialist  
New Mexico Environment Department  
Hazardous Waste Bureau, WIPP Group  
2905 Rodeo Park Drive East, Bldg 1  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505  
(505) 476-6047  
[megan.mclean@state.nm.us](mailto:megan.mclean@state.nm.us)

Ricardo Maestas  
Hazardous Waste Bureau  
[Ricardo.Maestas@state.nm.us](mailto:Ricardo.Maestas@state.nm.us)

Michael L. Woodward  
Hance Scarborough LLP  
400 West 15th Street, Suite 950  
Austin, TX 78620  
[mwoodward@hslawmail.com](mailto:mwoodward@hslawmail.com)  
(512) 479-8888

J.D. Head  
Fritz, Byrne, Head & Gilstrap, PLLC  
221 W. 6th St., Suite 960  
Austin, TX 78701  
[jhead@fbhg.law](mailto:jhead@fbhg.law)  
(512) 476-2020

Robert A. Stranahan, IV  
Law Office of Robert A. Stranahan, IV  
29 A Rancho Mañana  
Santa Fe, NM 87506  
(505) 577-0729  
[Rstranahan1@me.com](mailto:Rstranahan1@me.com)

Dennis N. Cook  
General Counsel  
Leslie Brett Babb  
Associate General Counsel  
Nuclear Waste Partnership LLC  
4021 National Parks Highway  
Carlsbad, NM 88220  
[dennis.cook@wipp.ws](mailto:dennis.cook@wipp.ws)  
[Brett.Babb@wipp.ws](mailto:Brett.Babb@wipp.ws)

George Anastas  
11021 BridgePointe Ct, NE  
Albuquerque, NM 87111  
(505) 7975452  
[GAnastas5@Comcast.Net](mailto:GAnastas5@Comcast.Net)

Scott Kovac  
Nuclear Watch NM  
903 W. Alameda #325  
Santa Fe, NM 87501  
[scott@nukewatch.org](mailto:scott@nukewatch.org)

Don Hancock  
Southwest Research and Information Center  
PO Box 4524  
Albuquerque, NM 87196-4524  
(505) 262-1862  
[sricdon@earthlink.net](mailto:sricdon@earthlink.net)

Deborah Reade  
505-9869284  
[reade@nets.com](mailto:reade@nets.com)

Joni Arends  
Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety  
P. O. Box 31147  
Santa Fe, NM 87594-1147  
(505) 986-1973  
[jarends@nuclearactive.org](mailto:jarends@nuclearactive.org)

Steve Zappe  
3 Escopeta Ct  
Santa Fe, NM 87506  
(505) 660-0353  
[steve\\_zappe@mac.com](mailto:steve_zappe@mac.com)

James Angel  
Myles Hall  
Carlsbad Field Office  
U.S. Department of Energy  
P.O. Box 3090  
Carlsbad, NM 88221  
[James.Angel@emcbc.doe.gov](mailto:James.Angel@emcbc.doe.gov)  
[Myles.Hall@cbfo.doe.gov](mailto:Myles.Hall@cbfo.doe.gov)

Dave McCoy  
Attorney  
[dave@radfreenm.org](mailto:dave@radfreenm.org)

Lindsay Lovejoy  
Attorney for SRIC  
(505) 983-1800  
[lindsay@lindsaylovejoy.com](mailto:lindsay@lindsaylovejoy.com)

James Channell  
[jkchannell32@yahoo.com](mailto:jkchannell32@yahoo.com)

*Madai Corral*

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Madai Corral  
Hearing Clerk  
P.O. Box 5469  
Santa Fe, NM 87502  
Phone: (505) 490-5803  
Email: [Madai.corral@state.nm.us](mailto:Madai.corral@state.nm.us)