

**Northern New Mexico Citizens' Advisory Board
Recommendation to the Department of Energy**

No. 2012-02

"Expand the Mission of the NNMCAB to Include Advice and Recommendations on the Evaluation and Use of WIPP as it pertains to the Disposal of Legacy Non-TRU Radioactive Wastes from LANL and Around the Complex"

BACKGROUND

The Northern New Mexico Citizens Advisory Board (NNMCAB) as part of the EM-SSAB recently clarified and affirmed its position regarding the expanded use of WIPP for disposal of non-TRU waste under DOE responsibility including greater than Class C wastes (Reference 1).

Although the NNMCAB mission is currently focused on the remediation of legacy wastes from LANL, our membership has become increasingly interested in the evolving evaluations surrounding the selection of a site for disposing of the radioactive wastes which are part of the legacy cleanup requirements at many of the DOE facilities. Our NNMCAB members are very aware that increasing attention is being given to WIPP as the solution to these DOE disposal needs.

The deep rock salt at WIPP and its demonstration of successful operation may be attractive to DOE as a solution to EM's radioactive waste disposal requirements, since most if not all of the higher level legacy wastes from the complex are not required to be retrievable.

It is widely recognized that the evaluation of a deep geologic repository for higher level wastes requires community involvement. In the consideration of WIPP, this includes community involvement at the New Mexico State level. Based on the potential for using WIPP as the vehicle for completion of the higher level waste cleanup at LANL and from other sites around the complex, the members of the NNMCAB propose an expanded role for the NNMCAB in this process.

In accordance with the EM SSAB Charter, "The Board may also be asked to provide advice and recommendations on any other EM project or issue."

RECOMMENDATION

DOE HQ should consider giving the NNM CAB an expanded mission in the evaluation of the potential use of WIPP for disposal of legacy higher level wastes from around the DOE complex. This scope could include:

1. Evaluation of appropriate technical aspects (such as transportation, packaging and waste stream analysis); and
2. Cooperative interfaces with organizations statewide in NM to facilitate community involvement.

INTENT

The NNM CAB has a strong interest in the continued use of WIPP for disposal of radioactive wastes that are the legacy of the nuclear weapons program, in particular regarding completion of the cleanup work at LANL. The NNM CAB members consider that they can make a contribution to both the technical aspects and the necessary community involvement as WIPP continues to be evaluated for this expanded role.

REFERENCES:

1. Letter to Senior Advisor David Huizenga, dated May 31, 2012