



Department of Energy
Albuquerque Operations Office
Waste Isolation Pilot Plant Project Office
P. O. Box 3090
Carlsbad, New Mexico 88221

APR 26 1989

Dear Colleague:

Enclosed for your information is a copy of the document entitled Draft Plan for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant Test Phase: Performance Assessment and Operations Demonstration. With the Construction Phase of the WIPP facility nearing completion, WIPP is preparing to initiate the next phase of its development: the Test Phase. The purpose of the Test Phase is to collect the scientific and technical data necessary to make a decision on whether to designate the WIPP as a permanent repository for defense transuranic (TRU) waste.

This document describes the two objectives to be achieved during the Test Phase of WIPP: (1) Performance Assessment, for determination of compliance with the Environmental Protection Agency Standard, 40 CFR 191, Subpart B, Sections 13 and 15; and (2) Operations Demonstration, for evaluation of the safety and effectiveness of the DOE TRU waste management system's ability to emplace TRU waste in the WIPP facility at the design rate.

The enclosed Test Plan describes a two-part program. Part One covers the first three years (through late 1992) and is followed by a holdpoint prior to the decision to implement Part Two. At this holdpoint, DOE anticipates having preliminary results from the Performance Assessment and Operations Demonstration activities, as well as the results of ongoing evaluations. After considering these results, DOE will determine whether to proceed with additional testing.

DOE reviewed the draft Plan with the goal of minimizing the amount of waste emplaced while still conducting a technically valid Operations Demonstration program. As a result, DOE has determined that the amount of waste emplaced in Part One will not exceed 3% (as opposed to the 4.4% value currently shown in the enclosed version). This decision is reflected in the Notice to Reader contained in the enclosed draft document and will be incorporated into the final Plan.

The draft Plan will be reviewed by independent organizations including the National Academy of Sciences and the New Mexico Environmental Evaluation Group. Comments will be incorporated as appropriate in a final test Plan expected to be released this summer.

Sincerely,

Jack B. Tillman
Project Manager

Enclosure

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