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Holtec International HI-STORE Consolidated Interim Storage Facility Project

Comment On: NRC-2018-0052-0376

Holtec International HI-STORE Consolidated Interim Storage Facility Project

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General Comment

NRC-2018-0052; WIPP, backup for HI-STORE CISF

When Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) was first conceived and designed, the intent was to provide a permanent storage site for all four of the radioactive material classes; spent nuclear fuel from all nuclear reactors, high-level waste left over from unused nuclear bombs, transuranic materials from nuclear bomb production and even low-level waste from medical and other commercial uses of radioactivity.

The "creeping" Permian salt formation 2,000-6,000 feet below the surface from Southeast New Mexico through West Texas, Oklahoma, clear up to Kansas was the perfect location for all classes for radioactive waste. It was 80 years ago when the site was selected for its tight rock formation and it will be for billions of years from now. Once a hole is dug into the salt, the cavity will immediately start closing up and encapsulate whatever was placed there, forever.

WIPP was the perfect solution for storing unwanted radioactive waste, but some politicians had this wild idea that maybe someday, some of the material there would be of use in the future and had to be retrievable. Anything stored in WIPP would never be retrievable from the salt rock after a few years. Therefore, a second site was needed for the unused spent nuclear fuel from all nuclear reactors, whether private commercial reactors or military reactors from the Navy.

Today, WIPP is only licensed to store transuranic materials that have been contaminated with radioactive plutonium and the other heavyweight elements from the last row on the periodic table. For those who didn't take Chemistry 101 in High School, those are the man-made heavy elements beyond uranium discovered after mankind learned how to split an atom. Not everyone agrees that splitting the atom was the greatest discovery of all mankind, YET.

After decades of trying to find a second storage site for retrievable unused radioactive fuel, it is ironic that the two sites being considered are right back in Southeast New Mexico and West Texas, also known as the Permian Basin. WHY? Because the politicians cannot change the science of geology (or chemistry). It is what it is.