Department of Energy
Carlsbad Field Office
P. O. Box 3090
Carlsbad, New Mexico 88221

DEC 5 2014

Mr. John E. Kieling, Bureau Chief
Hazardous Waste Bureau
New Mexico Environment Department
2905 Rodeo Park Drive East, Building 1
Santa Fe, NM 87508-6303

Mr. Butch Tongate
Deputy Secretary and Acting Division Director
Environmental Health Division
New Mexico Environment Department
Harold Runnels Building
1190 Saint Francis Drive, Room 4050
Santa Fe, NM 87502-5469

Subject: WIPP Nitrate Salt Bearing Waste Container Isolation Plan Implementation Update, December 4, 2014

Dear Mr. Kieling and Mr. Tongate:

The purpose of this letter is to provide the New Mexico Environment Department the WIPP Nitrate Salt Bearing Waste Container Isolation Plan Implementation Update, December 4, 2014. This update will be posted to the WIPP Information Repository within five working days.

We certify under penalty of law that this document and all attachments were prepared under our direction or supervision in accordance with a system designed to assure that qualified personnel properly gather and evaluate the information submitted. Based on our inquiry of the person or persons who manage the system, or those persons directly responsible for gathering the information, the information submitted is, to the best of our knowledge and belief, true, accurate, and complete. We are aware that there are significant penalties for submitting false information, including the possibility of fine and imprisonment for knowing violations.

Please address any questions you may have regarding the WIPP Nitrate Salt Bearing Waste Container Isolation Plan Implementation Update, December 4, 2014, to Mr. George T. Basabilvazo at (575) 234-7488.

Sincerely,

Original Signatures on File

Jose R. Franco, Manager
Carlsbad Field Office

Robert L. McQuinn, Project Manager
Nuclear Waste Partnership LLC

Enclosure

cc: w/enclosure

T. Kliphuis, NMED	*ED
R. Maestas, NMED	ED
C. Smith, NMED	ED
S. Holmes, NMED	ED
CBFO M&RC	

*ED denotes electronic distribution

CBFO:EPD:GTB:MN:14-2657:UFC 5486.00

WIPP Nitrate Salt Bearing Waste Container Isolation Plan Implementation Update

December 4, 2014

Panel 6 Initial Closure

Access to Panel 6

a. Rollback

- Contamination Assessment— Radiological contamination assessments of the underground are ongoing with drifts E-140, W-30, and W-170 south to S-1950 being rolled back to a Controlled Area. Radiological control personnel continue to perform surveys at the entrance of Panel 6 to determine if the area can be rolled back to an RBA in preparation for Panel 6 initial closure activities.

- Fixing/Decontamination Activities—Not started.

- Underground Entries—Preventive maintenance activities are underway on various pieces of heavy equipment in the underground. Entries this week are underway.

b. Ground Control Status

- Shaft/Hoist—Preventive maintenance and preoperational checks continue in support of placing the Waste Hoist back into full service. The Waste Hoist has been placed in service for conveyance of equipment and emergency egress. The waste hoist's availability for emergency egress is allowing for additional personnel to be underground at one time, which allows us to increase our pace of safety-related activities such as bolting and panel closure. Accumulated water in the Waste Shaft sump continues to be removed to uncover the headrope/tailrope guide weights. Once this activity is complete then final inspections can be performed.

- Bolting—Priorities continue to include resumption of bolting and the initial closure of Panel 6. Bolting will need to be initiated in the Panel 6 entries in preparation to support Panel 6 initial closure activities. Underground bolting in the uncontaminated areas resumed on November 15, 2014. Bolting is being prioritized based on geotechnical inspections and surveys. Bolting activities have transitioned to the E-140 drift. Bolting commenced at the S-700 drift and has currently progressed to the S-1100 drift and will continue southward to the S-1950 drift (end of controlled area). Preparations have begun for cleaning and maintenance of bolting equipment to be used in contaminated areas.

c. Habitability

- Communication Systems—Initial inspections have been performed for the area

between the Air Intake Shaft and Salt Shaft Station. Radiological rollback has allowed access to some mine phones, radio, and public address system locations in this limited area. As a result, operability tests have been performed for these underground mine phones, radio, and public address system locations. As radiological rollback continues towards Panel 6, mine phones in the Panel 6 area will be checked and, if necessary, will be repaired and have batteries replaced.

- Self-contained self-rescuer— caches will be restocked, if needed, in the drifts (e.g., W-30, S-2750) to Panel 6. Habitability activities have started near the shaft areas and are progressing towards the south end of the underground via drifts (E-140, W-30 and W-170) and will continue towards drifts (S-2750 and S-3080) that provide access to Panel 6 to support Panel 6 initial closure activities.

- Eye wash stations— inspections in accessible areas have been completed.

- Other Activities—Underground fuel storage tank fire protection inspections have been completed. Preventive maintenance has been completed for the underground ambulance and the underground forklift to be used for bolting in contaminated areas. Preventative maintenance is in progress for the underground rescue truck.

d. Drills, Training, Mockups

- An underground evacuation drill was performed on December 3, 2014.

Equipment/Ventilation/Materials

a. Electrical

- Ongoing visual checks are being performed to evaluate the extent of soot accumulation on electrical equipment and to clean, if necessary. The underground electrical cleaning is about 40% complete. Cleaning of some underground switch stations is ongoing.

b. Ventilation

- Air Flow—The underground ventilation system is currently operating in filtration mode using one 860 fan that supplies a nominal flow rate of 60,000 standard cubic feet per minute to the underground. Preventive maintenance was performed on the 860B fan and was placed online on November 5, 2014.

- Roof Bolting—The number of pieces of diesel equipment that can be operated for roof bolting will be limited by the available ventilation in the work area and the minimum ventilation flow rate assigned to each piece of equipment based on Mine Safety and Health Administration air quality requirements. Due to limited ventilation airflow, ventilation adjustments will have to be made as a prerequisite in each location where bolting equipment will operate to ensure equipment airflow.

c. Stage Needed Materials in Underground

- Bulkheads for the initial closure of Panel 6 are fabricated and are located in the underground. No additional staging of materials is currently underway.

Document Preparation

a. Work Planning

- Revisions to work planning documents to address Panel 6 initial closure activities are in progress.

b. Safety Basis Documents

- Safety basis documents that support safety basis authorizations for Panel 6 initial closure activities are undergoing review.

Summary - Information Requests/Status

None to date.