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### **For Immediate Release** **Hanford Shipment Arrives Safely At Waste Isolation Pilot Plant**

**CARLSBAD, N.M., July 14, 2000** – A shipment of defense-generated transuranic radioactive waste from the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE's) Hanford Site arrived safely today at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP).

The shipment left the Richland, Wash. site at about 5 p.m. (Pacific Time) July 12 and arrived at WIPP today at about 2:10 p.m. (MT). Hanford is the fourth DOE site to ship waste to WIPP.

Over the next 35-year period, Hanford will send some 2,500 shipments of transuranic waste to WIPP. A schedule for shipments beyond the first one has not yet been determined.

The 1,800-mile trip took about 46 hours, including the time required for WIPP drivers to stop and inspect the truck every 100 miles or two hours. The inspection stops are performed in accordance with safety protocols developed by DOE and the Western Governors' Association (WGA).

Since opening March 26, 1999, WIPP has received 63 shipments of transuranic waste. DOE has disposed of 41 shipments of waste from the Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site (Boulder, Colorado), 17 shipments from Los Alamos National Laboratory (New Mexico), and four shipments from the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory (Idaho Falls). During the expected 35-year operating life of WIPP, the DOE will transport some 37,000 loads of transuranic waste from 23 locations nationwide.

Several years ago, DOE began working with the WGA, and states and tribes along WIPP transportation routes to prepare for waste shipments. Since 1988, more than 18,000 emergency response personnel have been trained nationwide.

WIPP, a cornerstone of the DOE's cleanup effort, is designed to permanently dispose of defense-generated transuranic radioactive waste left from the research and production of nuclear weapons.

Located in southeastern New Mexico, 26 miles east of Carlsbad, project facilities include disposal rooms excavated in an ancient, stable salt formation 2,150 feet (almost one-half mile) underground. Waste disposal operations began at WIPP March 26, 1999.

Transuranic waste consists of clothing, tools, rags, debris, residues, and other disposable items contaminated with radioactive elements, mostly plutonium.

For more information about WIPP, call 1-800-336-9477, or visit the WIPP Web site at <http://www.wipp.carlsbad.nm.us>.