

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

Media Contacts

Dennis Hurtt
U.S. DOE Carlsbad Field Office
(505) 234-7327

Bobby St. John
Washington TRU Solutions LLC
(505) 234-7348
<http://www.wipp.ws>

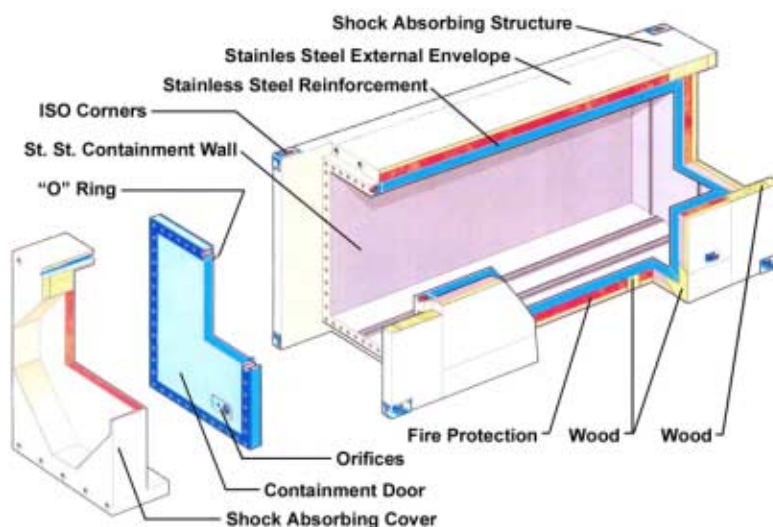
DOENews

For Immediate Release

DOE Looks at New Shipping Package for WIPP Use

CARLSBAD, N.M., March 15, 2004 – A new transuranic (TRU) waste transportation package may soon be in use for Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) shipments. Packaging Technology, Inc. of Tacoma, Washington, has submitted a safety analysis report to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) seeking approval for the new Type B transportation package.

DOE is considering the new package, known as the Transuranic Package Transporter Model III (TRUPACT-III), for shipping large boxes of contact-handled TRU waste to WIPP. The TRUPACT-III is a rectangular package that measures 8'2" x 8'8" x 19'10.5". This new type of package would avoid the need to repackage waste in the large boxes into smaller containers to fit into existing shipping containers. Large waste boxes account for about 25 percent of the current TRU waste inventory.



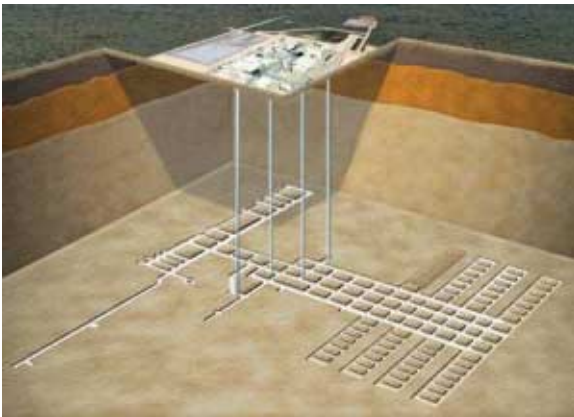
-More-

Use of this new package and elimination of repackaging will simplify handling, avoid unnecessary radiation exposure to workers and reduce the overall number of shipments to WIPP by approximately 2,900.

The TRUPACT-III relies on a single, integrated structure to protect the waste containers that are placed inside it.

To obtain NRC certification, it must meet the same stringent requirements for normal transportation conditions and for severe accidents that existing certified containers must meet. The certified containers now used to transport TRU waste include the TRUPACT-II, HalfPACT, RH 72B and CNS 10-160B. All WIPP shipping packages must meet the rigorous NRC requirements before NRC certifies them for use. NRC approval is expected to take approximately 13 months.

DOE continues to seek improvements in transportation and operations, as well as its robust protection for human health and the environment.



WIPP is the nation's solution for cleaning up defense-generated transuranic waste located at DOE sites across the country. In operation since March 1999, WIPP has received over 2,300 waste shipments and has safely disposed of more than 18,000 cubic meters of transuranic waste in the repository located nearly one-half mile underground.