



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF **ENERGY**

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FIRST OAK RIDGE REMOTE-HANDLED TRANSURANIC WASTE SHIPMENT ARRIVES SAFELY AT WASTE ISOLATION PILOT PLANT IN NEW MEXICO *Energy Department meets regulatory milestone*

OAK RIDGE, Tenn. – The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) achieved a major environmental cleanup milestone this week with the first shipment of Remote-Handled Transuranic (TRU) Waste leaving DOE’s Oak Ridge Reservation and arriving safely at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) near Carlsbad, New Mexico.

“For the first time ever since its creation in 1943 during the war effort, the highest level waste from manmade nuclear materials is being shipped out of Oak Ridge,” said Congressman Zach Wamp. “The safe removal of this radioactive waste is an important accomplishment for the Department of Energy and demonstrates its commitment to the continued environmental cleanup of the Oak Ridge Reservation.”

The first shipment left the Oak Ridge Transuranic Waste Processing Center the morning of February 26 for a 1,300 mile journey and safely arrived at the WIPP site on February 27. Just five months ago, the first shipment of Contact-Handled TRU Waste from the Oak Ridge Reservation safely arrived at WIPP, again allowing another regulatory milestone to be achieved.

“The start of remote-handled shipments to WIPP honors our commitment to move this waste out of Oak Ridge and place it in a permanent repository,” said Gerald Boyd, Manager of DOE’s Oak Ridge Office. “We have kept our commitment to the State of Tennessee to meet a cleanup milestone for the Oak Ridge Reservation to begin shipping by February 28.”

Oak Ridge obtained approvals in January from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the New Mexico Environment Department, and DOE’s Carlsbad Field Office to certify and ship Remote-Handled TRU Waste to WIPP. This involved examining the physical and chemical characteristics of the waste to ensure it is suitable and approved for disposal at WIPP.

“This is a great accomplishment for both Carlsbad and Oak Ridge,” said Dave Moody, Manager of DOE’s Carlsbad Field Office. “By working together DOE was able to safely package and transport TRU waste for final placement at WIPP as part of DOE’s national cleanup effort.”

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Safety is the highest priority to the DOE as TRU waste is transported. Prior to departure from Oak Ridge, the Tennessee Highway Patrol conducts a Level VI safety inspection, which is the commercial vehicle industry's highest level inspection, to ensure there are zero-defects in the vehicle and its cargo while also checking driver qualifications. Additionally, the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency and the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation inspect the shipping casks to ensure radiation levels are within regulatory limits. Shipments are prepared for transport from Oak Ridge by EnergX, LLC, DOE's operating contractor for the Transuranic Waste Processing Center.

WIPP is a DOE facility designed to safely isolate defense-related TRU waste from people and the environment. Waste temporarily stored at sites around the country is shipped to WIPP and permanently disposed in rooms mined out of an ancient salt formation 2,150 feet below the surface. WIPP, which began waste disposal operations in 1999, is located 26 miles outside of Carlsbad.

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Photos of First Remote Handled Shipment from Oak Ridge:

PHOTO 0498 - Departure of first shipment of Remote-Handled Transuranic Waste in a RH-72B shipping cask from Oak Ridge, Tennessee on February 26 for a 1,300 mile journey to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant near Carlsbad, New Mexico.

PHOTO 0244 - Cooperation between the Department of Energy, the Tennessee Highway Patrol and Tennessee Emergency Management Agency allows for a thorough safety inspection of trucks shipping Remote-Handled Transuranic Waste from Oak Ridge to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant near Carlsbad, New Mexico.

PHOTO 0467 - The Department of Energy works closely with the Tennessee Highway Patrol to conduct an extensive inspection of transport trucks carrying Remote-Handled Transuranic Waste prior to shipments leaving Oak Ridge.

PHOTO 0320 – Tennessee State Troopers conduct a rigorous safety inspection of the Department of Energy's Remote-Handled Transuranic Waste prior to shipment from Oak Ridge.

PHOTO 72B OR WIPP 3 - Arrival of the first Oak Ridge, Tennessee shipment of Remote-Handled Transuranic Waste at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant near Carlsbad, New Mexico.

PHOTO 72B OR WIPP 2 – On February 27, the first Remote-Handled Transuranic Waste shipment from DOE's Oak Ridge, Tennessee site safely arrived at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant near Carlsbad, New Mexico.