



# U.S. DEPARTMENT OF **ENERGY**

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

## **Media Contact:**

Deb Gill  
U.S. DOE Carlsbad Field Office  
(575) 234-7270  
[www.wipp.energy.gov](http://www.wipp.energy.gov)

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## **DOE Hosts German Energy Official, Signs MOU to Share WIPP Information**

CARLSBAD, N.M., September 15, 2011 – A high-ranking energy official from Germany formalized a partnership between her country and the United States during a recent visit to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP).

Dr. Dorothee Mühl, Deputy Director General Manager of Germany's Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology (BMWi), and other German officials visited WIPP, the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE's) underground repository for disposal of defense-generated transuranic (TRU) waste, on September 14 and signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreeing to an exchange of knowledge between the two nations on matters related to radioactive waste disposal.

"Germany and the United States have the world's most extensive experience with radioactive waste disposal in salt formations," said Dave Huizenga, DOE's Acting Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management. "A strong partnership between the United States and Germany is good for advancing radioactive waste management activities around the world."

Representatives from URS Washington TRU Solutions LLC, Sandia National Laboratories and Los Alamos National Laboratory joined Mühl and the Carlsbad Field Office (CBFO) in signing the agreement at DOE offices in Carlsbad, N.M. Community leaders, including members of the Carlsbad City Council and the Carlsbad Chamber of Commerce,

- More -

witnessed the ceremony. Mühl and the other German officials toured the WIPP site itself, 26 miles southeast of Carlsbad, earlier in the day.

WIPP has long been seen as a model for underground radioactive waste disposal, but international interest in the project has increased over the past few years.

This summer, three graduate students from the Technical University at Clausthal in Germany — all interested in radioactive waste management careers — worked with scientists at WIPP.

“The exchange of ideas is paramount to success in science,” said CBFO Interim Manager Ed Ziemianski. “I’d like to see this academic exchange continue to grow, and I think this MOU with Germany will help it do so.”

CBFO is also developing its international program by providing the Department of State with brochures to distribute to representatives from other nations, inviting them to send their operations workers and engineers to Carlsbad for training in various aspects of running a waste management facility including safety, quality assurance and safeguards.

WIPP is a DOE facility designed to safely isolate defense-related TRU waste from people and the environment. Waste stored at TRU waste 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.

Caption: David Garcia, acting deputy manager of the U.S. Department of Energy’s Carlsbad Field Office, signs a Memorandum of Understanding for sharing knowledge about radioactive waste disposal with Germany. Looking on is Dr. Dorothee Mühl, who signed the agreement on behalf of the German government.