



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF **ENERGY**

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DOE Reaches Recovery Act Goal With Cleanup of All Legacy Transuranic Waste at Sandia National Laboratories

CARLSBAD, N.M., May 3, 2012 –The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) completed cleanup of the Cold War legacy transuranic (TRU) waste at Sandia National Laboratories (Sandia) in Albuquerque, New Mexico when four shipments of remote-handled (RH) TRU waste from Sandia arrived at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) near Carlsbad, N.M. for permanent disposal on May 2, 2012.

The DOE Carlsbad Field Office (CBFO) reached one of its final milestones under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) with the legacy TRU cleanup at Sandia.

Under ARRA, legacy TRU waste shipments were expedited in support of DOE's goal to dispose of 90 percent of legacy TRU waste by 2015. The Sandia waste shipment campaign, which began in 2011, was supported by \$1.6 million in ARRA funding. "An important component of the Department's ARRA investment was to focus on waste removal from small quantity sites at locations around the country where a comparatively small amount of legacy TRU waste was present," said Senior Advisor for EM David Huizenga. "With this last shipment of RH TRU waste from Sandia, we've now achieved goals to remove legacy TRU waste from eight small quantity sites with ARRA funds."

Sandia was also the 22nd site in the nation to be completely cleaned of legacy TRU waste. "The removal of legacy TRU waste from sites greatly reduces our Cold-War footprint and fewer people now live in the proximity of TRU waste as the result of ARRA funding," said Huizenga.

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New Mexico Governor Susana Martinez, who was on hand to see the shipments leave Sandia, said the milestone is extremely important to New Mexico and its residents.

“Cleaning up the legacy TRU waste at Sandia helps further reduce the nuclear waste footprint in the State of New Mexico,” said Governor Martinez.

ARRA funds allowed highly trained teams to safely prepare and load waste shipments ahead of schedule and resulted in the clean up of defense-related TRU from the following:

- General Electric Vallecitos Nuclear Center – California
- Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory – Site 300 – California
- Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory – California
- Nevada National Security Site (Nevada Test Site) – Nevada
- Nuclear Radiation Development, LLC – New York
- Argonne National Laboratory – Illinois
- Bettis Atomic Power Laboratory – Pennsylvania
- Sandia National Laboratories – New Mexico

WIPP became operational in 1999, and 14 sites were cleaned of legacy TRU waste during its first 10 years. Through the \$172 million ARRA investment, eight additional sites were cleaned of legacy TRU waste during the three-year period that followed.

TRU waste consists of materials contaminated with radioactive elements that have atomic numbers greater than uranium, including tools, rags, protective clothing, sludge and soil.

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, N.M.

Additional information on ARRA funding and DOE EM can be found at www.em.doe.gov. Additional information about CBFO and WIPP can be obtained at www.wipp.energy.gov.