



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF **ENERGY**

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WIPP USES RECOVERY ACT FUNDING TO REDUCE NUCLEAR WASTE FOOTPRINT

CARLSBAD, N.M., August 2, 2011 – The U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE's) Carlsbad Field Office (CBFO) reduced the nuclear waste footprint by using American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds to expedite the clean up of five transuranic (TRU) waste storage sites and to make important infrastructure improvements at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP).

Expediting TRU waste shipments supports DOE's goal to dispose of 90 percent of legacy TRU waste by 2015, saving taxpayers million of dollars in storage and maintenance costs.

Recovery Act 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

Three additional sites are expected to be cleaned of legacy TRU waste by the end of calendar year 2011.

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“The removal of legacy TRU waste from sites greatly reduces our Cold-War footprint and fewer people now live in the proximity of it as the result of Recovery Act funding,” said CBFO Recovery Act Federal Project Director and Office of Site Operations Director Casey Gadbury. “We are on schedule to complete clean up of eight TRU legacy sites by the end of the year. That’s quite an accomplishment.”

WIPP became operational in 1999, and 14 sites were cleaned of legacy TRU waste during its first 10 years. Through the Recovery Act investment, eight additional sites will be cleaned of legacy TRU waste during the three year period that followed.

Through Recovery Act funds, the number of weekly shipments being sent to WIPP increased by 26 percent. Notably in 2010, WIPP received a record 1,194 shipments in a single year. DOE shipped 5,891 cubic meters of TRU waste from generator sites in FY 2010, a 35 percent increase from the 4,378 cubic meters shipped during FY 2008.

A significant amount of Recovery Act funding was spent on 24 initiatives aimed at improving the long-term safety and environmental compliance of WIPP. In January, the reconstruction of the WIPP south access road was completed. This \$4.4 million initiative significantly improved the safety for those who travel the road. In addition, if approved by New Mexico and Texas, the refurbished road will also become part of an alternate route for WIPP shipments traveling from the east. The new route will reduce the number of miles shipments travel, which will enhance safety and save money over the life of the project.

“The south access road is an example of a successful project resulting from Recovery Act funding at WIPP. WIPP is going to be open for some time, and using these funds to ensure our infrastructure is safe and reliable is smart and responsible stewardship,” said Gadbury.

The \$172 million in Recovery Act funding used by CBFO included upgrades and replacement of aging equipment and facilities that were approaching or had exceeded designed service life at WIPP. Other projects included upgrades to WIPP’s evaporation pond and the acquisition of new waste handling and mining equipment.

Additional information on the Recovery Act funding or DOE’s Office of Environmental Management can be found at www.em.doe.gov. Additional information about CBFO and WIPP can be obtained at www.wipp.energy.gov.

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.

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