



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF **ENERGY**

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DOE Awards Non-competitive Financial Assistance to the Western Governors' Association and the State of New Mexico

CARLSBAD, N.M., June 30, 2011 – The U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE's) Carlsbad Field Office (CBFO) awarded follow-on, five-year cooperative agreements with the Western Governors' Association (WGA) for \$10 million and the State of New Mexico for \$7,062,000 on June 30, 2011.

The Cooperative Agreement with the WGA is for oversight of the transportation of transuranic (TRU) waste through western states to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, near Carlsbad, New Mexico. The WGA and the DOE coordinate activities to train safety and emergency response personnel along approved transportation routes to ensure the safe transport of TRU waste to WIPP.

The WGA is an organization formed by the Governors of the western states to address issues of common concern among the states. One of these areas is the transportation of TRU waste through the member states to WIPP. The award continues to provide for funding and technical assistance to designated states under the National TRU Program (NTP).

The Cooperative Agreement with the State of New Mexico is to also provide for continued funding and technical assistance to enhance the state's emergency response capabilities.

The awards are follow-on actions from the previous 5-year agreements and have not increased from the FY 2011 DOE funding levels. Both agreements are provided for under the Section 16 provisions of the WIPP Land Withdrawal Act, as amended, in 1996.

WIPP is a DOE facility designed to safely isolate defense-related TRU waste from people and the environment. TRU waste consists of materials contaminated with radioactive elements that have atomic numbers greater than uranium, including tools, rags, protective clothing, sludge and soil. 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. The NTP has a vital role in the DOE cleanup of former nuclear weapons and research sites.