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The Department of Energy Announces Major Cold War Legacy Waste Cleanup Milestone
Waste Isolation Pilot Plant Receives 10,000th Shipment

CARLSBAD, NM - The U.S. Department of Energy today announced that the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) received its 10,000th shipment of transuranic (TRU) waste over the weekend. This marks an important milestone in DOE's mission to clean up the country's Cold War legacy.

"This accomplishment reflects the hard work and dedication of our workers and contractors," said Energy Secretary Steven Chu. "It also demonstrates the Department's commitment to future generations as we continue our cleanup mission as safely and quickly as possible."

The 10,000th shipment, which consisted of defense-generated contact-handled TRU waste, arrived at WIPP on Sept. 24, 2011. The shipment came from DOE's Advanced Mixed Waste Treatment Project in Idaho, which has accounted for nearly half of the shipments WIPP has received.

WIPP's first shipment came from Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico on March 26, 1999. Other milestone shipments have included the final shipment from the Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site in 2005 and the first shipment of remote-handled waste in 2007. By the end of calendar year 2011, legacy TRU waste at two-thirds of the original waste sites will be dispositioned at WIPP.

"Since WIPP opened in 1999, the facility has been committed to safely and compliantly reducing the defense legacy TRU waste footprint," said Dave Huizenga, DOE's Acting Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management. "WIPP has been a tremendous success, and I congratulate everyone involved on a job well done."

Since its opening, WIPP has received and disposed of more than 77,000 cubic meters of defense-related TRU waste that safely traveled more than 12 million total miles from locations across the country. As of August 2011, the Department has achieved a total Cold War legacy cleanup footprint reduction of 55 percent, of 515 of 931 squares miles. Investments made through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act allowed the Department to accelerate cleanup efforts. These investments in the TRU waste program have reduced lifecycle costs by \$1.2 billion.

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 is located 26 miles outside of Carlsbad, New Mexico.

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