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**EPA WIPP Virtual Public
Meeting**

**April 2021 Letter from EPA to DOE on
Future Expectations**

EPA Office of Radiation and Indoor Air

August 17, 2021



Goal and Ground Rules of Session 2



- Goal: Provide a forum for people to provide input to EPA staff related to WIPP on issues separate from the CRA-2019
- Agenda
 - ✓ 2-slide summary of the April 20, 2021 EPA letter to DOE on future expectations
 - ✓ Public input
- This is an informal dialogue (no official transcript)
 - ✓ Meeting will be recorded
- EPA staff will be facilitating the meeting via Zoom
 - ✓ Please be civil/polite
 - ✓ Stakeholders wishing to speak can raise their hand in Zoom; mic rights will be given in order

Background of April 2021 letter to DOE



- EPA (L. Veal) sent a letter to DOE/CBFO (R. Knerr) on April 20th, 2021, detailing EPA's expectations regarding DOE's proposed future expansion of the WIPP
- DOE plans to request two new panels at WIPP; DOE/NNSA is analyzing the disposal of additional plutonium and other wastes at the facility, which will require additional panels
- Physical changes of this nature to the repository require prior EPA approval
- EPA staff expect that any additional panel requests will likely require a rulemaking – this change would be a significant departure from the existing certified repository
- In conjunction with proposed new panels, the Agency anticipates needing additional key material:
 - technical information identified and documented in the 2017 recertification decision;
 - site characterization;
 - information on future anticipated wastes; and
 - the expected repository design

Key Categories to be Addressed



- Actinide Solubility
 - EPA's review suggests that the plutonium (Pu) solubility will be higher than what is currently being modeled and DOE's model of Pu solubility should be updated
- Modeling the Salt Creep Closure of Open Areas
 - Current WIPP design will have more open areas in the repository than originally assumed at closure, and their presence needs to be accounted for in the modeling.
- Characterization of the potential for underlying high-pressure brine
- Hydrogeologic information will need to be reviewed, and new data potentially collected since panels will be closer to the western land withdrawal boundary
- Potential future wastes should be included in an analysis of an expanded repository
 - Downblended surplus plutonium and plutonium pit production waste
- New repository design will be needed

DOE August 12 Response Highlights



- DOE agrees, to the best of its ability, to submit for EPA review information that represents the anticipated state of the repository at the time of closure
- DOE states that they have not made a decision beyond the two replacement panels
- DOE will work to resolve items identified in the 2017 recertification decision
- DOE agrees to continue working with the EPA to identify and collect additional site characterization data that may be needed for regulatory compliance