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WIPP UPDATE: November 8, 2016

Work Resumes at WIPP

Recovery and restart operations have resumed at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) as of Saturday, November 5, a day after a team investigating a rock fall confirmed that the fall was limited to Room 4 of Panel 7. Workers returned to normal ground control operations in the non-prohibited areas outside of Panel 7 over the weekend, while geotechnical engineers re-entered Panel 7 to collect geo-mechanical data from the non-prohibited areas of the panel.

“A representative from the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) was part of the entry team that investigated the rock fall, and we have continued to coordinate with them throughout the investigation,” said Todd Shrader, Manager of the DOE Carlsbad Field Office (CBFO). “MSHA, CBFO and Nuclear Waste Partnership (NWP) approved re-entry of the area to collect additional data on Saturday, and by Sunday afternoon, the geotechnical engineers had analyzed the data and concluded that all of the non-prohibited areas were stable.” Bolting operations in Panel 7 resumed on Monday.

Geotechnical engineers have increased monitoring of convergence rates (salt creep) for Panel 7, and NWP is working on plans to increase bolting efforts in order ensure worker safety and viability of disposal capacity when waste emplacement operations resume.

Next WIPP Town Hall Meeting – December 8

The City of Carlsbad and DOE co-host Town Hall meetings to provide updates on WIPP recovery and restart activities. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 8, at 5:30 p.m. Location: Carlsbad City Council Chambers, 101 N. Halagueno Street. This meeting will be a special Town Hall focused on mining and ground control at the WIPP site. WIPP Town Hall Meetings are live streamed at <http://new.livestream.com/rrv/>.