



Department of Energy
Carlsbad Field Office
P. O. Box 3090
Carlsbad, New Mexico 88221

AUG 28 2017

Ms. Lee Anna B. Veal, Director
Office of Radiation Protection Division
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

Subject: Planned Change Notice Regarding Panel 7 Configuration of Transuranic Waste Emplacement

Reference: Letter from F. Marcinowski, EPA to I. Triay, DOE, approving alternate use of Panel 1 at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, August 7, 2001. U.S. EPA, Washington, D.C.

Panel 1 Utilization Analysis for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, Revision 0. April 26, 2001. Sandia National Laboratories, Carlsbad NM. ERMS 518323

Dear Ms. Veal:

The purpose of this letter is to notify the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of the Department of Energy/Carlsbad Field Office (DOE/CBFO) intent regarding planned changes in the utilization of Panel 7 at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) facility. The emplacement approach for Panel 7 that is described below provides the flexibility needed for the DOE/CBFO to determine the optimum waste configuration in each disposal room at the time of emplacement based on considerations of worker safety. This change closely parallels the change approved by EPA regarding the under-utilization of Panel 1 (Marcinowski 2001).

No additional waste will be placed into Room 7 of Panel 7. This disposal room has been closed and isolated by the installation of bulkheads in both the S-2520 drift and the S-2180 drift.

Ground conditions prohibit access to Rooms 4 and 6 of Panel 7 between north of the S-2520 drift and south of the S-2180 drift such that no additional waste will be emplaced in this portion of these rooms. Since resumption of normal operating status on January 4, 2017, CH-TRU waste containers are being placed in the S-2520 drift portion of Room 6 of Panel 7. Magnesium oxide (MgO) backfill will be emplaced in this area based on the calculated mass of cellulose, plastics, and rubber such that an MgO safety factor of 1.2 will be maintained. Additionally, Room 6 of Panel 7 currently includes previously abandoned-in-place, radiologically contaminated equipment. A figure is enclosed that shows the general location of areas within Panel 7 that we are not planning to use for waste disposal (Figure 1).

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No additional RH-TRU mixed waste canisters are currently planned to be emplaced in boreholes in Panel 7 at this time. Utilization of the remainder of Panel 7 will be based on geomechanical/ground control considerations to ensure worker safety. The Sandia National Laboratories report dated April 26, 2001, *Panel 1 Utilization Analysis for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant*, demonstrated this type of change in utilization does not significantly change long-term performance expectations or compromise long-term repository compliance. Based on the April 26, 2001 analysis the same conclusion is made for the change in utilization of Panel 7.

If you have any questions, please contact Mr. George T. Basabilvazo at (575) 234-7488.

Sincerely,



Todd Shrader, Manager
Carlsbad Field Office

Enclosure

cc:

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CBFO M&RC

*ED denotes electronic distribution

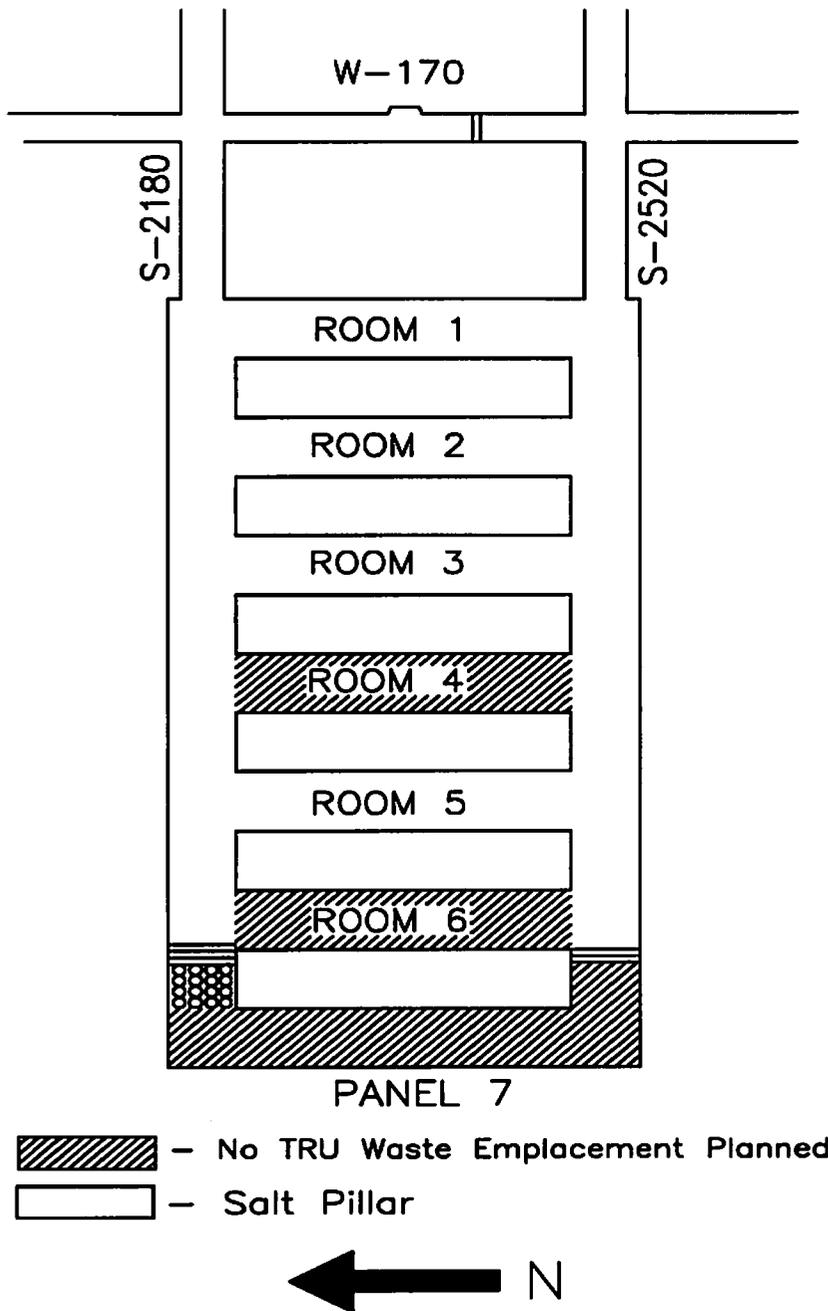


Figure 1 – Generalized plan view of panel 7 and the areas that we are not planning to utilize for Transuranic waste emplacement.