Mr. Todd Shrader  
Manager, Carlsbad Field Office  
U.S. Department of Energy  
P.O. Box 3090  
Carlsbad, New Mexico 88221-3090

Dear Mr. Shrader:


Your letter describes the need for the new shaft and its benefit as part of the upgrade to the underground ventilation system. It also provides additional discussion relating to your view that the WIPP will continue to meet the regulatory requirements for long-term isolation of transuranic waste. Historical analyses (e.g., the original compliance certification application) have identified that the shafts are not pathways for releases, but the Impact Assessment enclosed with your letter is dated 2014 and does not address the data and analysis issues identified in EPA’s 2017 recertification Federal Register Notice (82 FR 33106).

I understand that the DOE plans to conduct a more up-to-date analysis as part of the 2019 recertification process. The EPA will look forward to fully evaluating this planned change as part of its review of the DOE 2019 WIPP recertification application.

Please feel free to contact me at (202) 343-9448 or have your staff contact Kathleen Economy at (202) 343-9844 or economy.kathleen@epa.gov if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Lee Ann B. Veal  
Director  
Radiation Protection Division
cc: Electronic Distribution
    George Basabilvazo, DOE/CBFO
    Russ Patterson, DOE/CBFO
    Andrew Ward, DOE/CBFO
    Betsy Forinash, DOE/HQ
    Alton Harris, DOE/HQ
    Ricardo Maestas, NMED
    Nick Stone, EPA Region 6
    EPA WIPP Team
    EPA WIPP Docket