

**SUMMARY OF STATEMENT
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BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION ON AMERICA'S NUCLEAR FUTURE

January 27, 2011

As the host state to the nation's only deep geologic repository for the disposal of nuclear waste, New Mexico has a unique perspective on the siting, opening, and operation of a nuclear waste repository. What lessons can be learned from the WIPP experience?

Some of the factors that led to the successful opening of WIPP are:

- Supportive local communities
- Outreach to public and community groups
- Public participation
- Visibility and transparency
- Involvement in the NEPA process

Public confidence in a nuclear waste repository is based on a range of issues, but foremost on sound science. Nevertheless, natural resource use and availability, social and economic factors, transportation safety, road improvements, waste characterization, and cooperation from generating facilities also play a significant role. New Mexico believes that economic development in the local community and the state as a whole is also paramount. Policy makers must seriously consider all these factors to reach consensus. Moreover, issues must be addressed early on and collaboratively by elected officials, scientists, community leaders, regulators, and the public.

Some of the lessons learned from the WIPP experience that should be considered in future repository siting efforts include:

- Seek early involvement of interested parties
- Attempt to articulate a clear, but flexible mission for the facility at the outset (civilian/military/both, high-level waste/used nuclear fuel/both, some waste/all waste) to guide the licensing or permitting phase
- Maintain openness and transparency throughout the entire process with public participation opportunities
- Develop and maintain trust and credibility
- Seek consensus early and often
- Recognize the multifaceted nature of the project – technical, political, social, economic
- Reveal and discuss scientific and technical problems openly as they arise