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Source Points

extension of WIPP’s operating permit. The new panel does not represent an increase in the scope for WIPP; the waste to be emplaced in Panel 11 is within original congressional volume limits established for the waste repository (see below).

“The successful start to mining Panel 11 was a great demonstration of how open dialogue and communication with our regulators and stakeholders, along with the support of the field office team, can help mission success,” said Michael Gerle, environmental regulatory compliance director for DOE-EM’s Carlsbad Field Office, which oversees WIPP.

Located 2,150 feet underground, Panel 11 is connected to the rest of the WIPP facility by new pathways that stretch nearly half a mile to the west from the existing mine, connecting not only the new panels but a new air intake shaft that is key to increased underground ventilation.

Workers are currently emplacing waste into WIPP Panel 8. Panel 8’s first room, Room 7, has been filled, and emplacement activities have moved to Room 6.

Record TRU waste shipments made in 2023

The Department of Energy’s Office of Environmental Management announced on January 30 that, for calendar year 2023, the department’s Waste Isolation Pilot Plant had its best shipment performance in 10 years, having received 489 transuranic (TRU) waste shipments from generator sites throughout the country. For comparison, WIPP received only 272 shipments in 2022.

Source Points continues