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For Immediate Release

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External Affairs

NWTRB Panel to Meet With DOE and State Representatives on Transportation Issues

The Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board's (NWTRB) Panel on Transportation & Systems will meet March 14-15, 1991, to explore and identify experience gained at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant's (WIPP) transportation program. The panel hopes that the civilian high-level radioactive waste program can benefit from efforts underway at WIPP. The meeting will be held at the Albuquerque Hilton Hotel, Colorado-Texas Room, 1901 University Boulevard, N.E., Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102; (505) 884-2500. The sessions, which are open to the public, will run from 8:30 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., on March 14, and from 8:30 A.M. to 12:00 noon on March 15.

The NWTRB is not responsible for reviewing the WIPP program, which is different from the civilian program to dispose of high-level radioactive waste. However, there are similarities between the two transportation programs including size and scope, approaches to accident prevention, and the need for emergency preparedness. Because the WIPP program will commence well in advance of the civilian program, these similarities offer the planners of the civilian program opportunities to learn from the experience of the WIPP program as it unfolds.

At the morning session on March 14, representatives of the Department of Energy (DOE) and its contractor, Westinghouse, will brief the panel on the transportation program. That afternoon, representatives of the Environmental Evaluation Group (EEG) of New Mexico, the Western Governors' Association (WGA), and the State of Nevada have been invited to comment on activities in their states or regions associated with the impending transport of radioactive waste.

On March 15, presenters from the previous day along with representatives of the DOE's Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management have been invited to participate in a round-table discussion. The group will explore ways in which planners of the civilian radioactive waste transportation program can learn from efforts already underway at WIPP and from future WIPP program activities associated with its large-scale radioactive waste transportation campaign.

The NWTRB was established by the Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act of 1987 to evaluate the technical and scientific validity of activities undertaken by the DOE's civilian high-level radioactive waste management program. In the same law, Congress directed the DOE to characterize a site at Yucca Mountain, Nevada, for the proposed development of an underground repository for the permanent isolation of commercial spent fuel and defense high-level radioactive waste. The Board is

responsible for analyzing the DOE's Yucca Mountain site-characterization activities and activities relating to the packaging and transport of the radioactive waste that ultimately could be stored there.

Transcripts of the meeting will be available on a library-loan basis beginning on May 1, 1991. For transcript information, please contact Ms. Victoria Reich, NWTRB librarian.
