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Office of Environmental Management
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[PRESS RELEASE
REPORT](#)

Washington, D.C. - Today, the Department of Energy's Office of Environmental Management (EM) released the initial accident investigation report related to the Feb. 14 radiological release at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) near Carlsbad, New Mexico.

"The Accident Investigation Board reviewed procedures related to safety, maintenance, and emergency management to better understand the aboveground events surrounding the radiological incident," said Matt Moury, EM Deputy Assistant Secretary, Safety, Security, and Quality Programs. "The Department believes this detailed report will lead WIPP recovery efforts as we work toward resuming disposal operations at the facility."

The report is comprised of two phases. The document released today includes the initial investigation that focused on the release of radioactive material from the underground facility into the environment and related exposure to aboveground workers, as well as the actions taken by Nuclear Waste Partnership, the management and operations contractor at WIPP, and federal employees in response to the release. Once entry teams determine the source of the radiological event, the board will gather additional information and release a supplemental report that focuses on the direct cause of the release and worker protection measures in the underground.

"This report will serve as guidance for the recovery team moving forward," said, Joe Franco, DOE's Carlsbad Field Office Manager. "We understand the importance of these findings, and the community's sense of urgency for WIPP to become operational in the future. We are fully committed to pursuing this objective."

WIPP has already begun implementing corrective actions to address many of the issues raised in the report. These include enhanced work planning, nuclear safety controls, deploying experienced supplemental contractor and federal staff to assist, and implementing additional senior contractor and federal oversight. A formal corrective action process will also be implemented to ensure that all of the issues raised in the report are addressed.

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