

Bruce Hamilton, Chairman  
Jessie H. Roberson  
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**DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES  
SAFETY BOARD**

Washington, DC 20004-2901



December 18, 2019

The Honorable Dan Brouillette  
Secretary of Energy  
US Department of Energy  
1000 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20585-1000

Dear Secretary Brouillette:

The Board received the enclosed anonymous allegation regarding the ventilation systems at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, which we are forwarding to you for action as you deem appropriate.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bruce Hamilton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Bruce" being more prominent than the last name "Hamilton".

Bruce Hamilton  
Chairman

Enclosure

c: Mr. Joe Olencz

From: Concerned WIPP Employees

To: DNFSB

The U.S. Department of Energy has failed to correctly prioritize the Most Significant & Proximate HAZARD for the many workers and visitors to the underground of the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP).

The U.S. DOE has yet to restore the desperately needed **Emergency Unfiltered Ventilation System**, Components (700 Fans A,B,C,) Capacity and Procedures to Prevent Fatalities and Safely Mitigate another underground liquid fueled vehicle fire such as that experienced on February 5, 2014. Failure to immediately restore this unfiltered emergency 700 Fan ventilation capacity needlessly places all WIPP underground personnel in **Clear and Present Danger** should there be a repeat of the fire type (liquid fueled vehicle) experienced on Feb 5, 2014.

The current 100% HEPA filtered ventilation system components would quickly clog / plug up, fail and be 100% disabled and totally inadequate while Jeopardizing and Compromising both Personnel and Nuclear Materials Safety during and after the fire! Emergency Underground Fire and Ventilation Procedures are also inadequate.

This failure to Confront Reality, properly categorize & prioritize the cause and effects of the WIPP Fire of Feb 5, 2014 so as to be better prepared for reoccurrence appear to be the product

of misplaced DOE political considerations rather than the technical and safety realities required to properly safeguard human life and nuclear material's safety in the WIPP underground.

Securing the 700 fans (emergency ventilation) during the fire of February 5, 2014 proved to be a tremendous mistake of Huge and Far Reaching Expensive Consequences that could have easily led to the death of numerous personnel in the WIPP underground during the fire.

The WIPP is even less able to protect underground personnel and the exposed nuclear materials containers today due to the complete absence of an adequate emergency unfiltered ventilation system, components and procedures!

All Fire Fighting Research, Experts and emergency procedures place maximum ventilation as priority #1 to safeguard human life while removing the Toxic Gases, Combustion Products, Heat, Combustible Products, Visibility Destroying Constituents in order to save human lives and prevent explosive conditions such as Backdraft and other deadly confined space conditions during the fire!