



# WESTERN GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION

*Serving the Governors of 19 States and 3 US-Flag Pacific Islands*

## Transportation, Storage, Disposal & Cleanup of Radioactive Waste and Spent Nuclear Fuel

### Policy Resolutions

*Assessing the Risks of Terrorism and Sabotage Against Spent Nuclear Fuel High-Level Waste Shipments*

*DOE Waste Isolation Pilot Plant and Transportation of TRU Waste*

*Interim Storage and Transportation of Commercial Spent Nuclear Fuel*

*Enhancing Security during Transport of Radioactive Materials in Quantities of Concern*

*Department of Energy Facilities Cleanup Program*

*Transportation of Spent Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste*

### Background

For more than 60 years, the West has played a critical role in the research, development and production of nuclear weapons at federal facilities in the West, including Rocky Flats, Hanford, and the Los Alamos, Idaho and Sandia National Laboratories.

In addition, the West is host to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP), the only open, permanent repository for radioactive transuranic (TRU) waste, as well as two sites that dispose of radioactive low-level waste. Finally, at present, the West has been identified in the Nuclear Waste Policy Act to serve as host to the planned Yucca Mountain repository for radioactive high level waste (HLW).

In 2010, more than 1,700 U.S. Department of Energy radioactive waste shipments are expected to pass through Western states. The West shoulders a disproportionate burden of the nation's responsibility to safely transport and dispose of radioactive and hazardous materials, and WGA provides a forum for the Governors to engage in federal efforts with a common and united voice.



### Ensuring Safe and Uneventful Transportation

Since the late 1980s, Western Governors have worked collaboratively with the Department of Energy to jointly develop and implement a comprehensive transportation safety program for shipments of radioactive materials to temporary storage and permanent disposal sites. The Western Governors have a long-standing Memorandum of Agreement with the Secretary of Energy that was most recently signed in 2009 with Secretary Steven Chu. The MOA outlines shared principles among the states and DOE and calls for a regional planning process to ensure safe and uneventful shipments.

### Coordinating Regional Interests at the National Level

In 2010, WGA worked with DOE and other regional organizations to hold the first DOE National Transportation Stakeholders Forum. The Forum provides an opportunity for state, federal, and tribal officials to discuss upcoming radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel shipments and strengthen protocols for emergency preparedness, communications, and educating the public.

## Documents

2009 WGA-DOE MOA

WIPP Fact Sheet

WIPP Transportation  
Safety Guide

## The WIPP Transportation Safety Program

In March 1999, the federal government began shipping radioactive waste by truck to a deep geologic disposal site in southeastern New Mexico called the Waste Isolation Pilot Project (WIPP). The waste comes from environmental cleanups at former nuclear weapons production sites throughout the country.

Prior to any shipments being received at the WIPP, Western Governors required an extra-regulatory set of procedures required by the Western states to ensure safe and uneventful transport and foster public confidence. The Governors established the Transportation Technical Advisory Group in 1989 to develop such protocols, which are in the WIPP Transportation Safety Guide. The WIPP Transportation Safety Program is often regarded the gold standard for safe transportation with over 9,000 completed shipments and only a few minor accidents involving these shipments, none of which resulted in a release of radioactive materials.

*Through a cooperative agreement with DOE, WGA funds WIPP corridor states to:*

- Plan and execute the principles outlined in the WIPP Transportation Safety Guide
- Track, inspect, and escort WIPP shipments

## Representing Western States Interests to the President's Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future

At the request of the Western States, WGA formed an ad hoc working group to monitor and provide Western state input into the deliberations of the President's Blue Ribbon Commission (BRC) on America's Nuclear Future. The BRC is tasked with reviewing the nation's policy on spent nuclear fuel and high-level waste and making recommendations to the President. WGA has policy resolutions that address issues such as nuclear power, interim storage, disposal, and security. WGA also has a standing committee to proactively address and provide input to the federal government on issues related to the transportation of radioactive materials.

The Ad Hoc Working Group will monitor the deliberations of the BRC, participate in BRC meetings on behalf of WGA to ensure that the Western Governors' policies are considered in the BRC's deliberations, and advise the WGA Staff Council on areas where new or amended positions are warranted.



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