

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY TO CONTINUE ITS SUPPORT TO THE WASTE ISOLATION PILOT PLANT AS A FACILITY FOR USE BY THE PARTICLE ASTROPHYSICS RESEARCH COMMUNITY.

WHEREAS, from the initial development of nuclear power during World War II to the present, New Mexico has given far more than its proportionate share of resources and energy, and this commitment continues today with the outstanding capabilities of Sandia national laboratories and Los Alamos national laboratory, as well as other national resources such as White Sands missile range and the very large array of the national radio astronomy observatory; and

WHEREAS, southeastern New Mexico has continued the trend by providing the host disposal site for the nation's defense- related nuclear waste, the United States department of energy's waste isolation pilot plant, in one of the world's largest evaporite salt deposits, near Carlsbad, New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, the deep geologic waste repository opened less than two years ago, and has already announced the availability of its underground and mine infrastructure to the particle astrophysics research community; and

WHEREAS, the New Mexico congressional delegation has applauded the department of energy for its willingness to

make the waste isolation pilot plant available for purposes other than waste disposal and has pledged its support; and

WHEREAS, the department of energy conducted a workshop in Carlsbad for the particle astrophysics community this past summer that brought wide interest and participation, and the consensus from the workshop was that an underground research facility at the waste isolation pilot plant is desired and needed; and

WHEREAS, for far too long United States-sponsored research requiring geologic shielding from cosmic rays has been performed at laboratories outside the United States; and

WHEREAS, it is time to establish a national facility in the United States, and several collaborations have made arrangements at the waste isolation pilot plant to begin construction of experiments while others have approached the plant with long-range plans; and

WHEREAS, the department of energy continues to support these efforts by providing the mine infrastructure and support services already in place and earmarked for thirty-five years of continuous operation; and

WHEREAS, the waste isolation pilot plant's primary attributes are that its host rock, salt, contains very little background radiation, unlike virtually all hard-rock mines, and that its waste disposal mission already pays for the high cost of providing an underground environment; and

WHEREAS, the cost savings realized by association with an existing federal project that provides mine-operations support are very important with almost all experiments can effectively be conducted at the waste isolation pilot plant's relatively shallow depth; and

WHEREAS, the cost savings realized by creating an underground laboratory at the waste isolation pilot plant may even allow those few experiments that need additional depth to be conducted at other existing facilities available in Canada, Italy and Japan; and

WHEREAS, the department of energy is a science agency and has recognized that it can contribute to the nation's overall science portfolio by providing the use of the waste isolation pilot plant for purposes other than waste disposal; and

WHEREAS, America's cold war victory has resulted in the creation of an underground resource of great value;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the United States department of energy be requested to continue its support for making the waste isolation pilot plant's underground and mine infrastructure available to the particle astrophysics research community; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the secretary of the United States department

of energy and to the New Mexico congressional delegation.