

May 28, 1979

The Honorable Gary L. Watkins
County Judge
County of Ector
Odessa, Texas 79761

Dear Judge Watkins:

Thank you for informing us of the endorsement of Ector County Commissioners' Court of the League of Women Voters of Odessa's Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIEP) proposal.

This matter is under consideration by the League of Women Voters of Texas. We are completing a television documentary on the subject this spring. The Board of Directors will carefully examine the pros and cons established by the research for this film. In addition, the energy director of the League of Women Voters of Texas is chairing a nuclear subcommittee for the Texas Energy Advisory Council. She will share the findings of this committee with our organization.

The League of Women Voters of Odessa has been diligent in its efforts on this matter. Thank you for your concern.

Sincerely,

Betty Anderson
President

BA:jl

bcc: June Naylor, LWV-Odessa
Karen Storey, LWV-Odessa Pres.
Laura Keever ✓
Diana Clark
S.O.

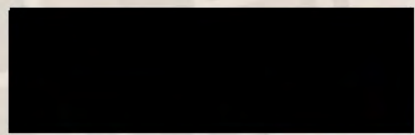
also Betty A.

Dear Olive,

Hi. I am sending copies
to Laura also as she is
still so interested in energy.

Do you have a copy of
our statements -- January and
June?

June Nagler


Mr. Holloway
Tx Advisory Council on Energy
Austin, Texas

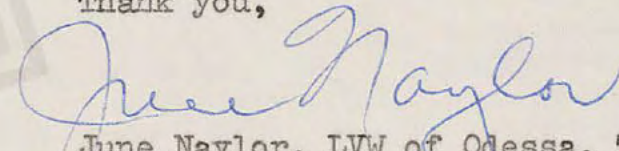
Dear Mr. Holloway,

Enclosed you will find a copy of the statement of the League of Women Voters of Odessa, Texas made in Albuquerque at the June hearings of the Department of Energy hearings concerning the proposed WIPP site for NM.

Thank you for the copies of the Energy Council's statements and suggestions. The local paper did have a confusing notice of your meetings set up across the state. I was proud of them, although if you had not known what the meetings were to be about, you would have had difficulty discovering from their article.

Would you please send us a copy of your statement to the Department of Interior in Albuquerque this August for our files?

Thank you,


June Naylor, LVW of Odessa, Tx
Water Chairman

[REDACTED]

Clinton B. Spotts
USGS
Reg. Cord. E.I.S.
EPA
[REDACTED]

Dear Mr. Spotts,

Enclosed you will find a copy of our statement which we made in January at the Hobbs, New Mexico meeting of the DOE. Also a copy of the statement presented to the June meeting of the DOE.

I hope you have received the Texas Water Plan, new Texas water aquifer maps with the Delaware Basin aquifers extended into New Mexico and a copy of the statement concerning the draft EIS on WIPP sent to Gov. Clements' office from the Texas Department of Water Resources in Austin.

Also, I hope the DOE has sent you copies of the Anderson Report (geology) and the Los Medanos Hydrologic Study by now.

It is wonderful to have the EPA working on this water problem.

Please let us know if we can help you gather information you need. If we can find it for you, we will send it to you for your use.

Sincerely,

June Naylor

June Naylor, LVW Odessa, Tx
Water Chairman

[REDACTED]

Dear Catherine,

Enclosed is a statement of the League of Women Voters of Odessa, Texas, made at the DOE hearing on WIPP in Albuquerque, NM the 7th and 8th of June.

At the request of Laura Keever I called Lloyd Leonard at the LAD office before the statement was made. He requested the following change in page one, paragraph two, sentence two.

(original) We have supported the economically and environmentally sound use of nuclear, coal and fossil fuel resources and the development of renewable energy resources including solar, wind, geothermal, etc.

(change) We have supported the economically and environmentally sound use of coal and fossil fuel resources and the development of renewable energy resources including solar, wind, geothermal, etc.

Saturday morning (9 June 1979) the NM State Board of the LWV had their first meeting. We requested 30 minutes of their time and presented the water problems to them. Last month they had had a meeting concerning the WIPP. At that time they wondered what Texas was doing? Wish we had been aware of the meeting and attended but....

Dr. George Goldstein, Chairman of Natural Resources and Environment, told me at the meeting of the DOE that NM planned to start studying their aquifers. It seems they have always done water by metes and bounds before. The Ogalla water study and our questions concerning the Rustler, Santa Rosa and Centozoic Alluvium had pointed out to them just how little they really knew about the problem. The League Chairman on their water will be following us and this study closely. I have requested the Tx Water Re. Dept send her a copy of the Texas Water Plan.

(Guess you're aware that these Delaware Basin aquifers we are concerned with in the WIPP study are the same aquifers concerned in the Pecos Compact and New Mexico law suit?)

Mark White, Tx Attorney General, asked for another hearing to be held in West Texas concerning the WIPP site. This was granted. The exact time and place to be announced later. (Probably late summer or early fall) (Possibly Odessa or Pecos)

Bruce King, NM Governor, asked for an extension on the time limit for written comments on the DEIS. This was also granted. The new deadline was extended 60 days which is about 6 Sept.

Herb Grubb of the Texas Water Development Board is going to print 400 copies of the aquifers of the Delaware Basin in New Mexico and Texas for the West Texas WIPP meeting. These will probably be ready in about a month. We certainly appreciate this. C.R. Baskin and his department have been drawing them in on the regular Texas maps for us.

In fact, Baskin's department, sent me enough maps for the six panel members of the DOE WIPP hearing of the Texas aquifers with New Mexico's drawn and colored (NM's Delaware Basin aquifers). The panel was very impressed with Texas knowledge of our water.

The chairman carrying the water will be Kay Grotbeck;
[REDACTED]

What we need from you is some advice as to what to do next. Do you think, with the three counties totally dependent on these aquifers, we could pass some sort of resolution?

Or a general resolution that no nuclear waste disposal sites should be in ANY aquifer that is ANYWHERE?

Let us hear from you.

June Naylor
June Naylor, Water Chairman
LVW Odessa, Tx

A STATEMENT PRESENTED BY THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF
ODESSA, TEXAS at the DOE HEARING 8 June 1979
Albuquerque, New Mexico

The League of Women Voters of Odessa, Texas, thank you for the opportunity to present some of our thinking on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement of the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant proposed for Eddy County, New Mexico.

We recognize some of the numerous and complex problems the United States faces in the energy field today. We have supported the economically and environmentally sound use of coal and fossil fuel resources and the development of renewable energy resources including solar, wind, geothermal, etc. We, who live in an oil and gas producing area in West Texas, certainly recognize the vulnerability of the too great dependence of our national economy on our depleting oil and gas resources.

We also support the governmental effort seeking a solution to the problem of storage of nuclear waste. At the same time we urge that nuclear waste be stored in properly engineered, biologically safe and environmentally sound repositories. In addition, we feel there should be a continuous stewardship built into the system of each repository as it is designed, not transitory agency responsibility. The responsibility needs to be spelled out in black and white so all will know who is responsible for operating the monitoring facilities and how this monitoring will be done. The responsibility for payment and/or replacement of land, water, property or human life in the area should be determined as an integral element of the project development.

The limits of liability assumed by the government in the event of loss of aquifers due to salt intrusion and/or radionuclear contamination should be addressed. Decisions and plans on the perpetual care and liability of responsibilities related to the licensed nuclear activities need to be shared with the public and should be made before, not after the problem arises.

In November of 1978 the League of Women Voters of Texas finished a groundwater management study for Texas. One of the primary objectives we agreed upon was that we should strive to maintain groundwater quality by preventing harmful contamination of aquifers.

After this Texas groundwater study was completed, we in Odessa began an intensive look at the proposed Waste Isolation Pilot Plant proposed for Eddy County, New Mexico. We had found two aquifers of the Delaware Basin actually present at the site of the mine--the Santa Rosa and the Rustler. Subsequent evidence has shown that the Cenezoic Alluvium Azuifer is also involved.

After studying the DEIS the LWV concluded that because of the small project area of influence adopted in the WIPP DEIS, the true hazard potentialities are not reflected. Because of the limited area of analysis the DEIS concludes that the impact is not too far reaching and that the true hazards are less serious than the risks assessed. The DEIS further implies that the public risks to Texas are either unquantifiable or insignificant.

For example, to quote the DEIS, page 7-62: "The Delaware Basin... contains some of the least productive aquifers in the United States."

We have not studied all aquifers in the United States and we cannot really judge this statement. But, it doesn't matter whether the Delaware Basin has the least productive aquifers of the United States. The aquifers of the Delaware Basin are the ONLY aquifers in this area. They are the only aquifers this area is ever likely to have in the foreseeable future unless we have drastic geographic or climatic changes.

Ward, Winkler, Loving and Reeves Counties of Texas are totally dependent upon these aquifers for their irrigation and municipal water supplies. Gaines, Andrews, Ector, Crane and Pecos Counties are partially dependent upon these water aquifers for their livelihoods in varying degrees.

We of the area would like to trade these aquifers in on new bigger, better sources of water. But, until someone can tell us how, they are the best we have. It seems the best policy we can assume is to protect what we have.

We certainly do not grant the point that the affected aquifers are the least productive in the United States.

Here we will refer you to the Continuing Water Resources Planning and Development for Texas in two volumes published May, 1977 and available from the Texas Water Development Board; Austin, Texas 78711 (P.O. Box 13087) The section on the Rio Grande Basin has use and availability data relevant to the WIPP site discussion. There is some implication of data from the Colorado River Basin section also.

There are over 250,000 United States citizens who live in the area of which we have been speaking. They are dependent upon this water every day, every year of their lives.

The DEIS on page 9-105 describes the DOE hydrologic studies thusly: "A computer code modeled the Delaware basin hydrology in a square mile area 36 miles on a side. Local boundary conditions were determined for this model. Then calculations performed with the model defined aquifer communication (or lack of it) and aquifer flow rates; they also tested the consistency between model generated numbers and hydrologic measurements in the field."

Page 7-68 states: "Groundwater in the Rustler Formation east of the Pecos River generally flows southerly and southwest along formational gradients and discharges into the Pecos River."

This ground water that moves into the Pecos River at Malaga Bend flows southward through Texas to the Rio Grande. In the upper part of the Pecos River drainage system in Texas, the Pecos River is directly connected to the Alluvium deposits in Loving, Reeves and Ward Counties. These deposits are extremely permeable, and large quantities of river water move into the aquifer due to the difference in hydrostatic pressure between the river and the alluvium. The alluvium deposits range up to 1,500 feet or more in thickness and yield large volumes of water used principally for irrigation." (letter 16 May 1979 Baskin)

We believe that the impact that the WIPP site could have on the water resources of the State of Texas can be properly evaluated only if the entire geologic sequence of formation and the hydrologic framework of the Delaware Basin in New Mexico and Texas be studied on an integrated, regional basis. Basic principles of hydrologic and hydrologic continuity dictate the necessity of aquifer-wide analysis. From the standpoint of water resources planning, development and management, the "region of influence" should be larger than the WIPP project used in the DEIS.

The aquifers of the Delaware basin are not restricted to the arbitrary limits of the DOE study. They are, in fact, interstate aquifers.

THE ENTIRE SYSTEM NEEDS TO BE UNDERSTOOD.

The actual mechanisms at work in this aquifer system are not fully understood. There seems to be a need for a detailed, monitoring and surveillance plan for the entire system--not just the arbitrarily chosen area 36 miles to a side. There should be establishment of observation wells in the Rustler, Cenozoic Alluvium and Santa Rosa aquifers.

The Texas Department of water Resources has done much work in this area in trying to define aquifers, measure levels of water and test for various mineral components of the water. The Texas Department of Health also tests wells in this area. I can find none of their data utilized in the EPS.

WHY?

It seems fairly clear that the interchange and flow of ground water in the Delaware Basin area of southeast New Mexico and southwest Texas is poorly understood at this time. Further research needs to be done before placing nuclear waste including long-lived transuranic waste in the area of these aquifers.

An aquifer is a priceless natural resource. The more desert-like the environment, the more delicate and precious the existing aquifers of the area. Because these areas of New Mexico and Texas are semi-arid, dry regions, the available water becomes even more precious than it would be in an area with much more plentiful water resources.

LWV, page 4

If these aquifers of the Delaware Basin were ruinously contaminated by either massive salt intrusions and/or radionuclide intrusions caused by the introduction of the WIPP site into the eco-system, we are taking a chance on making the area downstream dependent on the water uninhabitable.

It would be impossible to maintain the present economy and population of this area without the ground water in question. As much surface water is utilized as possible, but without a change in climate, there is not enough surface water available.

When any nuclear waste repository is introduced into an area, it becomes part of the ecosystem of that area until the radionuclear materials which have been introduced reach the same radionuclear level that is natural for the surrounding area. We would like to see the WIPP repository monitored until this is achieved.


In conclusion we would like clarification of a perpetual care plan for the WIPP repository and the monitoring system that is to be utilized.

We feel DOE needs to pool their considerable resources and knowledge with the resources and knowledge of the Texas Water Development Board and other appropriate agencies to make an intensive study of the aquifers of the Delaware Basin area of southeast New Mexico and southwest Texas before any further decisions on the WIPP site are made.


Thank you for your time and consideration.

N. Mexico League & position
Call Diana re Date NAPP hearing

Write statement for Diana on Laura's hrg. Diana
9/4/89

 & recommendation
Position on National for State Bd.

Lloyd Leonard prep. for position on increased domestic
production.





League of Women Voters of the United States 1730 M Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036 Tel. (202) 296-1770

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August 20, 1979

Ms. Mary Cooper Crymes
Secretary
League of Women Voters of Odessa

Dear Mary:

Thank you for your letter requesting help and clarification on problem areas of the WIPP Draft Environmental Impact Statement. I will attempt to answer your questions point by point.

1. The League's energy position on nuclear fission is an integrated part of the League's position on the mix of energy sources to be used between now and the year 2000. It states, "reliance on nuclear fission (light water reactors) should not be increased. Special attention must be given to solving waste disposal and other health and safety problems associated with this energy source." The Guide for State and Local League Action on National Energy Position (copy enclosed) outlines action opportunities for state and local Leagues under this position (see page 4 of the Guide). The national Board updated the action strategy at its June meeting. The enclosed June National Board Report (pp. 11 and 12) summarizes that action.

2. The League has a national Land Use position which states that aquifer and aquifer recharge areas are one of the areas of critical concern that should be identified and regulated. In addition, the League has supported the preservation and prevention of contamination of aquifers which are a drinking water supply source under the national Environmental Quality positions. We also supported the Safe Drinking Water Act which mandates protection of underground drinking water supplies.

In her testimony on the proposed Hazardous Waste Regulations (March 7, 1979) Hester McNulty, Environmental Quality Chair, urged that no hazardous waste facilities or disposal sites be located above sole source aquifers. And, in her more recent comments on the proposed Deep Well Injection Regulations (August, 1979), which establish state programs for control of injection into, below or above aquifers, she emphasized that the proposed programs did not address the inter-state nature of aquifers and the potential for one state's decisions affecting another state using a shared aquifer for a water supply source. In fact, she used the potential impact of the WIPP on Texas aquifers as an example of the need for an interstate mechanism in the regulations.

Ms. Mary Cooper Crymes
Secretary
League of Women Voters of Odessa
[REDACTED]

August 20, 1979
Page 2

Ms. McNulty is also very aware of the interstate ramifications of the Ogallala since she lives in Colorado where large portions of Eastern Colorado are dependent on this aquifer for both domestic and irrigation water. She has contacted the LWV of Colorado, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Kansas, and Texas about the possibility of forming an Inter-League Committee for the Ogallala. While there is great interest there is no funding, but she is looking for a potential source.

Your Texas groundwater study was very impressive and your League's study of your local situation has given you the expertise to question the adequacy of the EIS in addressing the potential for aquifer contamination. Just be sure you keep in touch -- which I understand you are doing -- with both the New Mexico and Texas LWVs.

3. The League's only specific position on nuclear waste is part of the general nuclear position which I discussed under (1) above. Again, I refer you to page 4 of the Guide for action opportunities at the state and local level.

4. The League has no specific position on monitoring nuclear waste sites, but because nuclear waste is a form of hazardous waste, the same precautions for disposal or storage that the League has supported for hazardous waste would apply. One of the most important of these is to assure that drinking water supplies are not contaminated. The League has strongly supported adequate monitoring of hazardous waste sites and deep well injection sites to assure that there is no excursion from the site. The definition of adequate varies -- for a less hazardous waste, quarterly might be considered adequate; but for nuclear it should probably be at least weekly. The other important factor is where the monitoring should take place. This must be determined by local site conditions. This is an area where we feel very strongly that full public participation is needed and we have therefore urged Leagues to bring these issues to the attention of the community. Helping the community to play an active role is certainly an appropriate League activity.

5. The League has taken a stand on state concurrence. The League supports development of a new process of federal and state cooperation. There should be thorough appraisal and determination of the best possible site by both federal and state governments with sufficient public participation to insure the integrity of the process. In the last analysis, states must have the right to concur or not concur.

Ms. Mary Cooper Crymes
Secretary
League of Women Voters of Odessa
[REDACTED]

August 20, 1979
Page 3

6. On the question of private companies operating nuclear waste disposal sites, the League supports industry bearing the full cost of waste disposal, but feels these problems must be dealt with within a federal framework.

I hope this has been of some help and that I have been able to clarify the points you raised satisfactorily.

Thank you for sending copies of the statement you made in Albuquerque, New Mexico on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement of the WIPP proposal. I have asked Tess McNulty, the national Environmental Quality Chair, to review the testimony and to respond to June Naylor's request for ideas on how to proceed. She has spoken to June on the phone and is also sending her some written comments. In the meantime, good luck in your activities.

Sincerely yours,

Dotty
Dorothy K. Powers
Energy Chair

enc.
cc: LWV of Texas



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August 20, 1979

Ms. June Naylor
Water Chairman
League of Women Voters of Odessa
[REDACTED]

Dear June:

Thank you for sending me the Texas aquifer maps and for the information you gave me on the phone which were a great help in drafting the LWV comments on the Deep Well Injection Regulations. As I told you on the phone Lloyd Leonard has sent me your letter to answer and it did arrive at an opportune time.

First, let me say how impressed I was with your statement. It is a good example of a local League using the expertise gained from a state LWV study at the local level. Also, I was reassured that you had contacted the New Mexico and Texas Leagues. Over the years, Leagues have learned to work together when addressing surface waters and the same sort of cooperation applies to underground aquifers.

You, of course, have your new state groundwater position to use when you consider what action to take at the Texas hearing on WIPP in September. In addition, there is a national Land Use position which includes aquifers and aquifer recharge areas as areas of critical concern which should be identified and regulated.

The national League has supported the preservation and prevention of contamination of aquifers when commenting on solid waste landfill regulations, hazardous waste storage and disposal regulations, and the proposed Deep Well Injection Regulations. The LWVUS supported the Safe Drinking Water Act which mandates protection of underground drinking water sources.

As nuclear waste is a form of hazardous waste, any storage or disposal site should ensure that there is no excursion from the site into either aquifer or surface waters. Also, that there be adequate monitoring so that any excursion can be identified and corrective measures be taken before contamination has spread beyond the immediate area.

Hydrologic and geologic data is of the utmost importance in determining if the WIPP will endanger your water supply aquifers or surface waters. You were correct in urging that this information be utilized in the decision making process. Where do you go from that point? First, you can urge that WIPP not be authorized unless there is

Ms. June Naylor
Water Chairman
League of Women Voters of Odessa
[REDACTED]

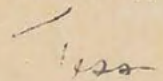
August 20, 1979
Page 2

assurance that Texas drinking water aquifers and surface waters will not be contaminated. You can also urge that, even if this assurance is given, there be adequate monitoring to detect any excursion.

What is adequate monitoring? It is a factor of where, how many, and how often. This is very dependent on local factors. I would suspect, after looking at the maps you sent, that weekly monitoring should be a minimum requirement. However, the Texas Department of Water Resources can help you determine this and they can also provide information as to where and how many sites there should be. The League should determine what is adequate based on the best technical expertise available as to just what is needed to protect water supplies.

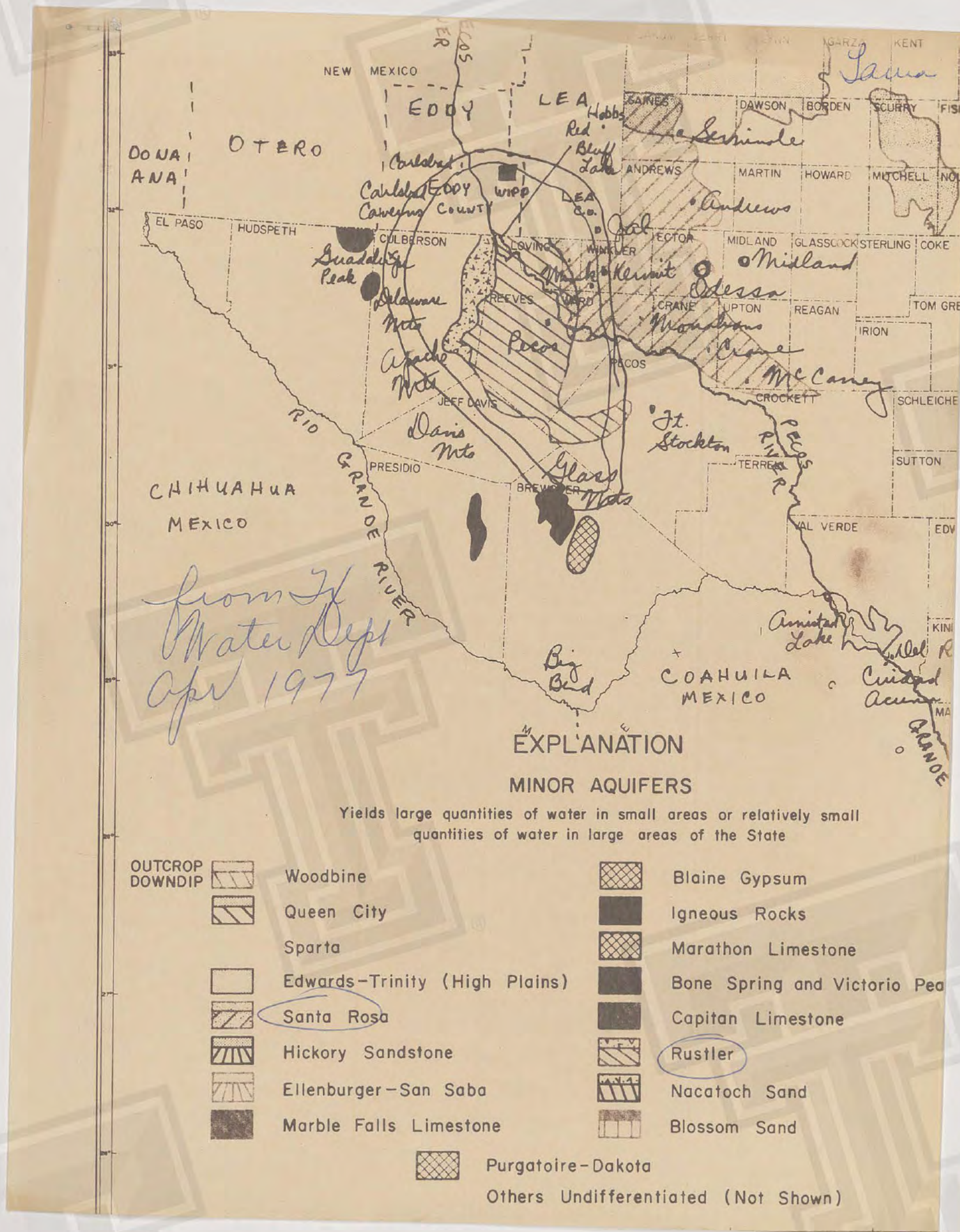
I hope this is helpful. If you have any questions, please write or call me [REDACTED]

Sincerely,


Hester McNulty
Environmental Quality Chair

cc: LWV of Texas
LWV of New Mexico

The DOE WIPP hearing for West Texas will be held
September 18 at UTPB, but the exact time, etc.
are still a mystery to us.....



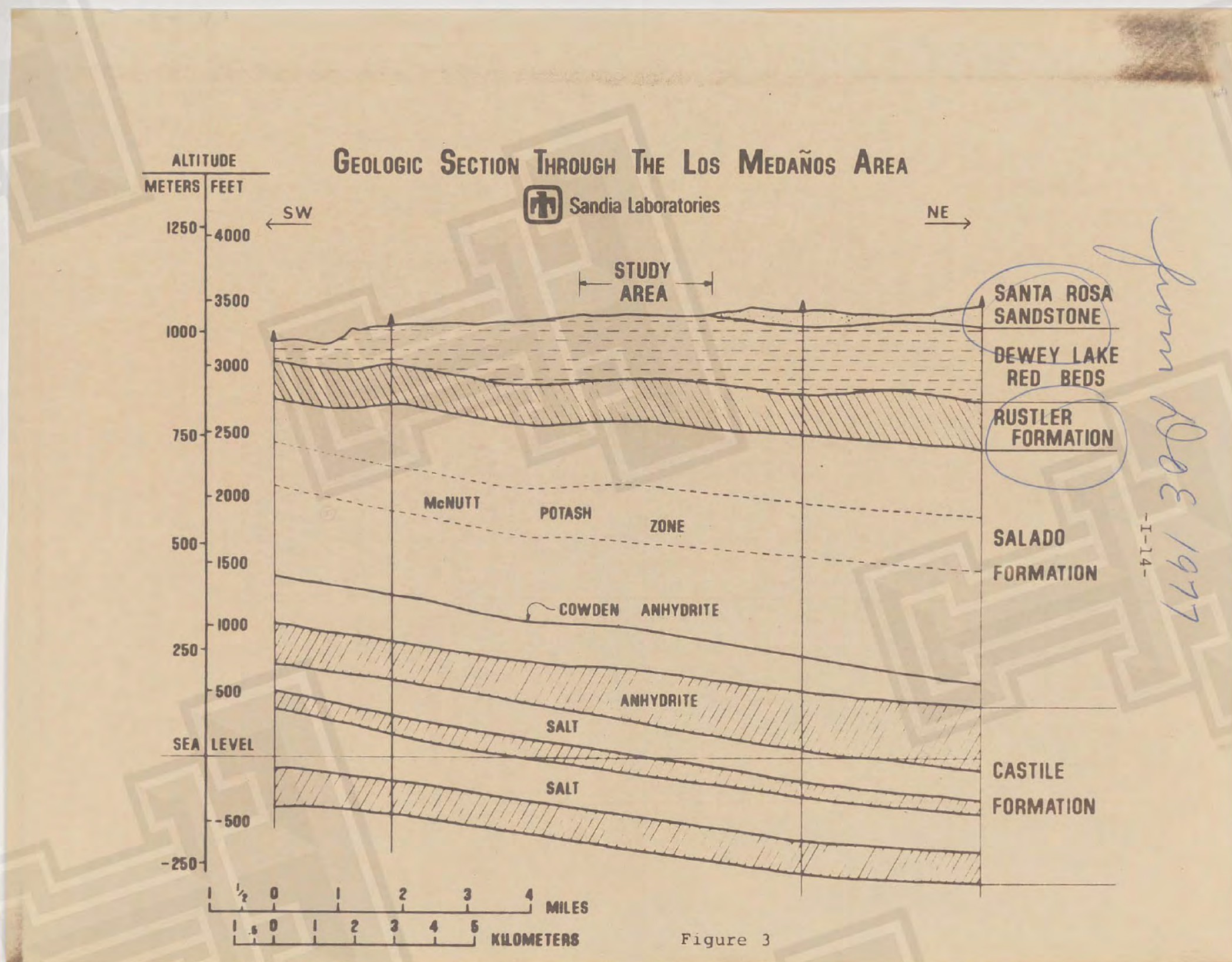


Figure 3

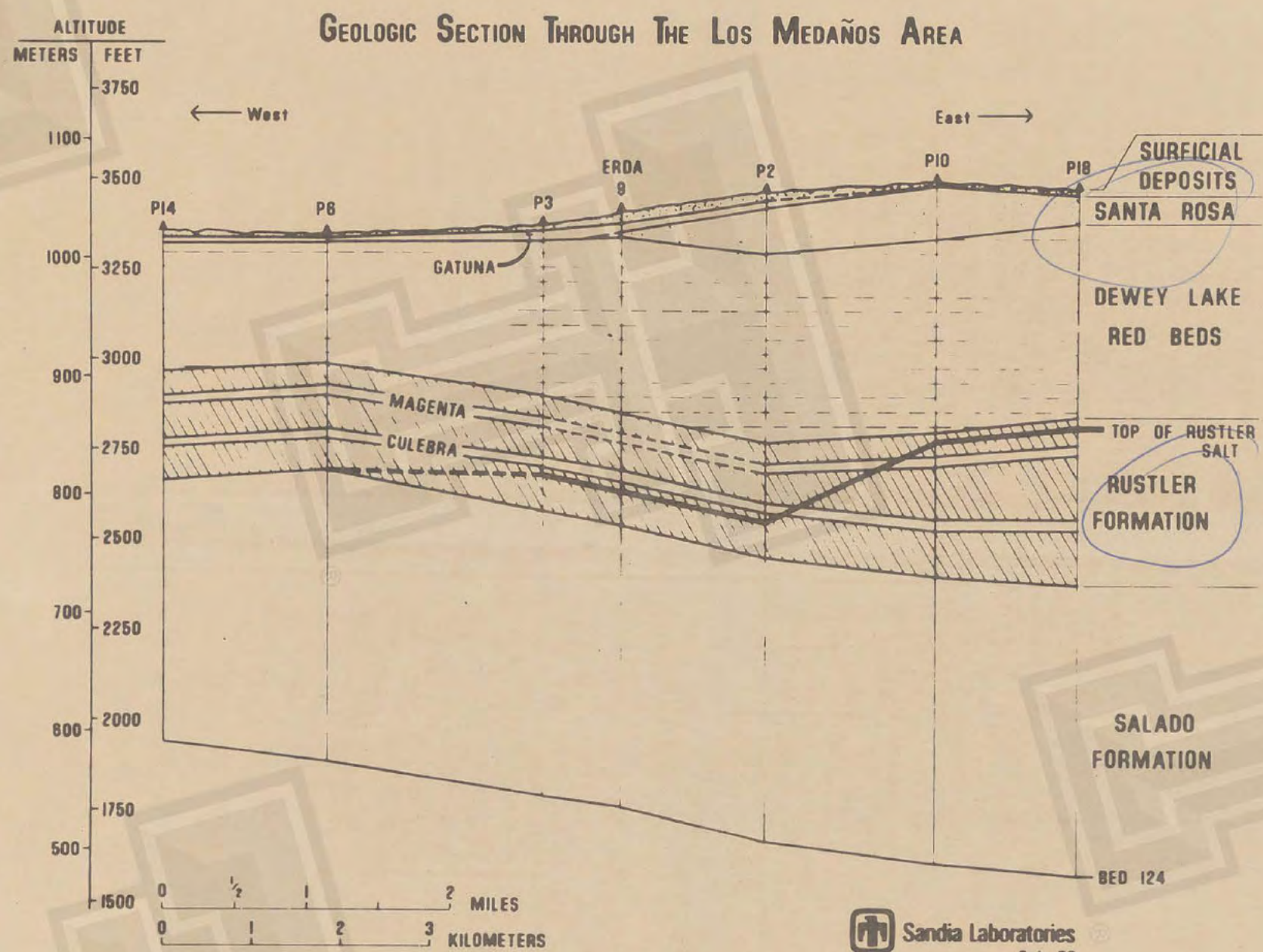


Figure 4

a statement concerning
THE WASTE ISOLATION PILOT PLANT (WIPP)

Laura

near Carlsbad, New Mexico
by the League of Women Voters of Odessa, Texas

We recognize the need for the United States to find a place to store the accumulated waste of our nuclear programs. However, there are some basic problems of the proposed Waste Isolation Pilot Plant near Carlsbad, New Mexico, which have not been solved.

First, according to the hydrological studies conducted by Sandia Laboratories in Albuquerque, New Mexico, there are high pressure deposits of natural gas and water underlying the site which are potentially dangerous if the high pressure gas should ever force the water into the WIPP site.

These natural gas deposits are potentially valuable sources of natural gas, but the WIPP site will remove them from usefulness. Also the potash deposits of the area will be rendered useless by the proposed chose of site.

Second, there have been earthquakes as recently as the spring of 1978 in Winkler County, Texas, which is adjacent to Eddy County, New Mexico, the location of the proposed WIPP site. These quakes show the area is not as geologically inactive as has been claimed by the Department of Energy.

Third, the aquifers of southeastern New Mexico and southwestern Texas are too close to the chosen site. The Santa Rosa limestones are actually present in the boundaries of the mine area. If any leakage should occur and seep into these water supplies, it could pollute a portion or the entire water supply of the area.

Because of the above reasons, we feel this site is not sufficiently safe for long-term storage of large quantities of nuclear waste.

If, however, the President of the United States and the Department of Energy choose this site in southeastern New Mexico, we would like to see the following precautions:

1. There should be monitoring of the mine until the mine site is no more radioactive than the natural radioactivity of the region.
2. There should be monitoring of private and public water supplies of southeast New Mexico and southwest Texas as long as it is necessary to minitor the mine. The monitoring should be at the expense of the United States government, not at the expense of the individual water user.

