

WATER, AIR AND LAND: A SACRED TRUST

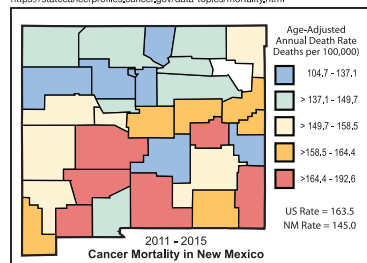
This map is a work in progress. The uses of water, air and land are diverse in New Mexico and will change dramatically with climate change. For caretakers of this sacred trust, the map offers a bird's eye view of the health of our environment. It documents primarily the energy-related sources of pollution, though in New Mexico other polluting factors are also at work. This map does not cover abatement sites, most solid waste facilities and voluntary remediation sites, among other things, and shows major water basins only. Note that the highest cancer death rate in New Mexico exists in southeastern and south central New Mexico and *only* there. In 2016 women in Lea County had the lowest life expectancy for women in the entire state.

Despite these health problems, both the federal government and the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) continue to promote new sites and expand existing ones, including the expansion of the Waste Isolation Pilot Project (WIPP) and the addition of two Consolidated "Interim" Storage Facilities (CISF) in S E New Mexico, Holtec International, near WIPP, and Waste Control Specialists - WCS (Currently, Interim Storage Partners - ISP) just over the border in Texas, have applied for NRC licenses to store every spent fuel rod from every nuclear reactor in the U.S. These facilities include tens of thousands of shipments of transuranic and high level nuclear waste. The WIPP transportation phase already accounts for almost all of the negative health effects of the entire project during normal operations. Though WIPP transportation is by truck and CISF transportation by rail, there is no reason to believe the CIS record will be any better.

Note that fallout from the 1945 Trinity test may very well extend south and west from the "official" plume shown on this map. Adequate testing has never been done, but thousands of people in Lincoln, Sierra, Otero and Socorro counties were exposed and suffered ill effects from that explosion. After the test, General Groves, military director of the Manhattan Project, stated that any future site for further atomic testing should be "preferably with a radius of at least 150 miles without population." Though the Nevada Test Site originally met this requirement, even 150 miles was not enough, as virtually every part of New Mexico has been covered by fallout clouds from the numerous aboveground nuclear detonations that took place at that site.

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Source: National Cancer Institute and the CDC
<https://statecancerprofiles.cancer.gov/data-topics/mortality.html>



Source: New Mexico Bureau of Geology & Mineral Resources <http://geoinfo.nm.edu>

