

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

March 3, 2017

TO: Steven Stokes, Technical Director
FROM: Anthony Battaglia, WIPP Cognizant Engineer
SUBJECT: Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) Report for February 2017

DNFSB Staff Activity: R. Quirk was onsite conducting routine oversight during February 6-10. J. Pasko and B. Weathers observed the National TRU Program (NTP) TRU Waste Corporate Board meeting held at the Carlsbad Field Office (CBFO) during February 7-8. Staff oversight during FY-2017 has averaged 4.6 person-weeks/month.

Waste Emplacement Activities. Waste emplacement continued through the month with the download of nine facility pallets of waste. The remaining waste packages in the Waste Handling Building are not authorized for emplacement until the process for evaluating oxidizing chemicals in the waste streams is approved. The contractor will use dunnage packages to maintain proficiency until the remaining waste assemblies are released for emplacement. The Board's staff will continue to closely follow waste emplacement activities.

Panel 7 is estimated to be filled by 2022 based on a projected shipping rate limited to a few shipments per week. Mining of Panel 8 is expected to resume in late 2017 and be completed in 2020-2021.

National TRU Program. The NTP Corporate Board meeting was held to discuss the updates of the NTP improvements to the Waste Acceptance Criteria compliance verification process. This included a discussion of the implementation plan for the Basis of Knowledge (process for evaluating oxidizing chemicals in the waste) which, when approved, will enable authorization of the emplacement of the remaining waste in the Waste Handling Building in the underground. The Basis of Knowledge will also identify treatment options for TRU waste in the Department of Energy complex that does not meet the acceptance criteria for shipments to WIPP. A CBFO and TRU waste generator sites workshop to resolve comments on the Basis of Knowledge has been proposed for March 14-15, 2017.

Document Control. Before waste is downloaded to the underground, a data sheet from the current procedure revision is filled out to ensure the Technical Safety Requirements and surveillance requirements were performed. During a waste evolution, a worker discovered during transport in the underground that the documentation for the data sheet for a waste package contained an obsolete version that was approved prior to the 2014 accidents. Upon discovering the discrepancy, the waste evolution was paused to complete the steps in the current procedure required under the new safety basis.