

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

June 9, 2017

MEMORANDUM FOR: S.A. Stokes, Technical Director
FROM: R.K. Verhaagen and J.W. Plaue
SUBJECT: Los Alamos Report for Week Ending June 9, 2017

DNFSB Activity: On Tuesday, Board Member Santos discussed the state of emergency preparedness and response with managers from the NNSA Field Office, LANL, and the Los Alamos County Fire Department. On Wednesday, Board Members Sullivan, Hamilton, Connery, and Santos received a briefing at the laboratory concerning the nuclear material inventory in the Plutonium Facility. That evening, they conducted a public hearing in Santa Fe regarding the safety posture of the Plutonium Facility.

DNFSB Staff Activity: Hanford Resident Inspector D.M. Gutowski observed the federal readiness assessment discussed below. M.W. Dunlevy was on site to support the Board visit and to observe the readiness assessment.

Transuranic Waste Facility (TWF)–Startup Activities: On Monday, a contractor operational readiness review team commenced their assessment of the TWF to commence nuclear operations. The review is scheduled to be completed next week and is to include performance demonstrations, various interviews, and an emergency exercise.

Plutonium Facility–Safety Basis: Late last month, LANL submitted to the NNSA Field Office for review and approval the 2017 annual update to the safety basis. In addition to this document, the safety basis document list currently indicates that the facility is operating under three versions of the Documented Safety Analysis and two versions of the Technical Safety Requirements.

Plutonium Facility–Readiness Activities: NNSA conducted a federal readiness assessment for the restart of aqueous chloride operations and the new start of americium oxide production capabilities (see 4/21/17 weekly). The review team concluded that the contractor is ready to begin these operations following completion of corrective actions for one prestart finding. The finding involves a lack of documentation to protect accident analysis assumptions in the safety basis associated with the mass of americium-241 used in this operation.

Federal Oversight: Last Wednesday, the DOE-EM Deputy Assistant Secretary for Safety, Security, and Quality Assurance approved a memorandum delegating specific safety authority approvals to the EM Field Office Manager. In the approval letter, the Deputy Assistant Secretary notes that because the EM Field Office is not yet fully staffed compensatory measures are necessary to ensure adequate subject matter expertise is used to support execution of the delegated safety authorities.

Inappropriately Remediated Nitrate Salt (RNS) Waste–Treatment Activities: This week, Waste Characterization, Reduction, and Repackaging Facility personnel successfully treated two more RNS waste drums for a total of six drums treated to date. They also received two additional RNS drums and returned 15 daughter transuranic waste drums to Area G.