

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

April 5, 2019

**TO:** Christopher J. Roscetti, Technical Director  
**FROM:** Daniel B. Bullen, Ph.D., P.E., Cognizant Engineer  
**SUBJECT:** Sandia National Laboratories (SNL) Report for March 2019

**Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (Board) Staff Activity:** The Board's staff provided zero person-weeks of on-site safety oversight at SNL during March 2019.

**Readiness Evaluation of the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) Mobile Loading Unit (MLU) Activity at Technical Area V (TA-V):** On March 5, 2019, National Technology and Engineering Solutions of Sandia, LLC (NTESS) responded to a request by the Sandia Field Office (SFO) to provide an evaluation of the appropriate level of readiness activity for the WIPP MLU activity (see SNL Cognizant Engineer Report for February 2019). After discussing the proposed activity, SFO and NTESS agreed that a Level 2 Readiness Assessment will be executed in accordance with GN470109, *Implementing the Startup and Restart Process for Nuclear Facilities, Operations, and Activities*. A Level 2 Readiness Assessment does not require an independent Federal Readiness Assessment. NTESS determined that the Readiness Assessment should be limited in scope and should focus on the interfaces between SNL personnel, the subcontractor crane operator, and the MLU personnel. NTESS did not commit to a schedule for the MLU activity but noted that it might occur within 12–13 months. NTESS also stated that a Plan of Action is currently being drafted and will be provided to SFO 4–6 months prior to the start of the Sandia Readiness Assessment. NTESS will also include the MLU Activity in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Fiscal Year Startup Notification Report, currently due on April 10, 2019.

**TA-V Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP):** On March 7, 2019, NTESS management approved the TA-V CIP as part of its commitment to improve the TA-V culture in response to the Federal Readiness Assessment (FRA) for the Reactivity Control System Upgrade at the Annular Core Research Reactor Facility (see SNL Cognizant Engineer Report for September 2018). The Corrective Action Plan (CAP) for the FRA identified the need for long-term targeted improvement in the overall level of formality and the rigor applied to processes in TA-V. NTESS developed the CIP to provide the framework for sustainability and the information needed to determine additional resource requirements. NTESS noted that the specific purposes of the plan are to:

1. Provide TA-V management with the framework to:
  - a. Continuously improve the learning culture in TA-V.
  - b. Develop a more rigorous and formal operational model.
  - c. Sustain long-term continuous improvements.
2. Implement NQA-1 as the Quality Assurance Standard.
3. Deliver on specific commitments made in the FRA CAP.

NTESS will develop a resource loaded schedule of activities and milestones to complete the corrective actions identified in the readiness process and the goals and tasks listed in the CIP.