

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

June 17, 2022

MEMORANDUM FOR: Christopher J. Roscetti, Technical Director
FROM: A. Boussouf, D. Gutowski, and J. Plaue, Resident Inspectors
SUBJECT: Los Alamos Activity Report for Week Ending June 17, 2022

Transuranic Waste Management: A. Boussouf remotely supported a DNFSB staff review of the process Waste Isolation Pilot Plant personnel use to certify transuranic waste for disposal using the Waste Acceptance Criteria. The team reviewed the certification process and walked through examples of the waste stream container review and approval specific to Los Alamos as well as other DOE waste generator sites.

Plutonium Facility–Accident Investigation: The NNSA Field Office formally transmitted the Incident Review Report for the January contamination event at the Plutonium Facility to Triad (see 6/3/2022 report). The field office requested Triad provide a corrective action plan for review and approval within 30 days that addresses all of the judgements of need from the report.

Federal Oversight–Conduct of Operations: The NNSA team that reviewed conduct of operations at the Plutonium Facility provided an outbrief to Triad personnel and field office management describing the conclusions of their assessment (see 2/25/2022 report). The field office requested the assessment earlier this year in response to concerns about conduct of operations following events last year such as the vault water bath and wet vacuum overflow events (see 4/2/2021, 7/23/2021 reports). The assessment team concluded that operations at the Plutonium Facility are substantially compliant with the requirements in DOE Order 422.1 *Conduct of Operations*, but that a high level of formality of operations is needed to support 24/7 operations for the pit production mission. They noted several issues including: weaknesses in control of equipment and system status, use of uncontrolled operator aids, and a need for improvement in training for maintenance and construction workers. The team also provided positive observations including: the recent investments in training for the expanding workforce, increased hiring and deployment of conduct of operations mentors, and implementation of oral board qualifications for working persons in charge. The team’s recommendations included: continued improvement of training especially for maintenance and construction personnel, better use of the conduct of operations mentors, and improvement to activity level work planning and control.

Area G–Safety Basis: N3B continues its efforts to develop a modern DOE-STD-3009-2014 compliant safety basis for Area G. This week, they briefed the EM Field Office manager on their progress developing an atmospheric dispersion protocol, a key input to the safety basis. Initial results are showing an increase in consequences to the public due to the methods used in the new protocol; however, N3B continues to evaluate the appropriate level of conservatism to include in this and other safety basis calculations. They plan to formally submit the completed protocol to the EM Field Office later this year for review and approval.

Wildland Fire: The Cerro Pelado wildfire west of the laboratory is now 100% contained. The Los Alamos Emergency Operations Center exited monitoring mode. Stage III fire restrictions remain in effect for the laboratory and surrounding areas.