

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

December 30, 2022

MEMORANDUM FOR: Katherine R. Herrera, Acting Technical Director
FROM: A. Boussouf and D. Gutowski, Resident Inspectors
SUBJECT: Los Alamos Activity Report for Week Ending December 30, 2022

Year in Review: A summary of the key developments of 2022.

- The DNFSB Los Alamos Office welcomed a new resident inspector, A. Boussouf, and marked the departure of J. Plaue, who returned to headquarters.
- The Board held a public hearing in Santa Fe to explore the safety posture at the Plutonium Facility and transuranic waste operations at Area G.
- NNSA accepted a safety basis to support receipt of large quantities of heat source plutonium at the Plutonium Facility with an “exigent condition” where worst-case consequences exceed DOE’s evaluation guideline for postulated consequences to the public.
- In May, the Emergency Operations Center partially activated in response to the Cerro Pelado wildfire west of the laboratory. The fire was contained in June without any significant impact to the laboratory.
- Both Triad and N3B continued regular shipments of transuranic waste containers primarily through shared use of the RANT Shipping Facility. Shipments of transuranic waste exceeded generation for the year.
- N3B performed work at Area G under several Justifications of Continued Operations while they continue developing a modern safety basis. Drill and Drain, Glovebag, and Corrugated Metal Pipe retrieval activities all went through readiness reviews in preparation for restart.
- In the fall, N3B management implemented a stop work to address safety concerns with conduct of operations, especially electrical safety and lockout/tagout. Work resumed following management review and corrective actions. In December, N3B management stopped work on all hoisting and rigging activities. These remain halted.
- Decontamination and Decommissioning activities at the Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Building increased early in the calendar year as the first glovebox removals commenced. Glovebox removals are not funded in fiscal year 2023 so current activities are limited to low-level waste removal.
- The transition of the Radioactive Laboratory Utility Office Building to a Hazard Category 3 nuclear facility to be known as PF-400 neared completion as Federal and Contractor Operational Readiness reviews occurred in May and February respectively.
- NNSA made the decision to restart the Waste Characterization, Reduction, and Repackaging Facility as a hazard category 3 nuclear facility to establish size reduction capabilities for oversized transuranic waste items. Safety basis development to support this transition also commenced this year.
- The team who will vent the Flanged Tritium Waste Containers stored at Area G performed a proficiency demonstration for federal assessors in the summer. Commencement of venting is awaiting permitting.