

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

November 11, 2005

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director  
**FROM:** C. H. Keilers, Jr.  
**SUBJECT:** Los Alamos Report for Week Ending November 11, 2005

**Independent DOE Oversight:** The DOE Inspector General Office has started a review of the TA-18 mission relocation effort, including the TA-18 Early Move and the NTS Critical Experiments Facility projects. Also, the DOE Independent Oversight and Performance Assessment Office (DOE-OA) was here this week and expects to issue a report on their review in December (site rep weekly 10/21/05).

**LANL Operations:** Last Monday (10/31), LANL began to implement a new operations management structure focused on consolidating operations authority and thereby addressing several major issues identified during last year's resumption reviews (site rep weeklies 9/9/05, 4/15/05). There are three key elements: the RDL – the single individual assigned authority, accountability, and ultimate responsibility for a facility and its compliance with its safety basis; institutional support organizations (ISOs), which set the standards and provide the RDL and RDL staff the tools, training, and other resources to be successful; and the responsible line managers (RLMs), who are responsible for ensuring work is done within the compliance envelope jointly and formally set with the RDL.

**Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Building (CMR):** On Wednesday, CMR declared a potentially inadequate safety analysis (PISA) because the locations of some safety-class fire suppression risers do not match safety basis descriptions; this could affect required actions if a riser becomes inoperable. The cognizant system engineer found the problem during a walk-down. CMR is requiring operations manager approval before securing any risers and has started the unreviewed safety question process.

**Pu-238 Operations:** NNSA and LANL are considering conducting a set of operational readiness reviews (ORRs) before startup of the new aqueous scrap recovery line; LANL is also reassessing the closure of several pre-start findings from LANL's June readiness assessment; schedule impacts are not yet known. Effort to resume the bench-scale operation near-term continue (site rep weekly 10/14/05).

**NNSA Site Office (LASO) Strategic Pause:** LASO has targeted starting its 3-month strategic pause on Nov 21<sup>st</sup>, provided planning is complete (site rep weekly 10/28/05). Objectives of the pause have shifted more to requirements and staffing analysis and to office process development, and less to training and qualification. With few exceptions, LASO management and key staff are now totally focused on planning the pause down to the level of developing improvement plans for each LASO sub-organization and for each federal employee; this already appears to be affecting federal management of the laboratory, as well as requiring increased LANL management attention.

As for direct nuclear facility oversight, LASO currently anticipates 4 deployed facility reps during the pause, compared to 9 deployed now and to 20 required per the last analysis (site rep weekly 1/7/05). LANL is assembling a team of ~10 operationally experienced contractors to backfill for some federal oversight functions now expected to lapse; some of these contractors were assisting certain nuclear facilities with implementing challenging safety bases; implementation may now slip further behind.

Without close attention, other efforts with significant nuclear safety implications may also be affected, such as: reducing Area G transuranic waste inventory, resolving the Plutonium Facility (TA-55) leak-path issue, implementing interim TSRs at TA-55, reducing the multi-year safety basis backlog, ensuring thorough and rigorous readiness reviews, and keeping the Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Building (CMR) replacement project on track to support eventual CMR decommissioning.