

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

February 19, 2016

MEMORANDUM FOR: S.A. Stokes, Technical Director
FROM: R.K. Verhaagen and J.W. Plaue
SUBJECT: Los Alamos Report for Week Ending February 19, 2016

DNFSB Activity: Board Chair Connery and Board Member Hamilton, accompanied by staff members M.W. Dunlevy and J.A. Pasko visited the lab for familiarization. The visit included walk-downs of the primary defense nuclear facilities and introductions with key federal and laboratory management.

DNFSB Staff Activity: On Tuesday, staff members T.J. Dwyer and A.H. Hadjian conducted a teleconference with personnel from the NNSA and LANL to discuss the status and planned path forward for conducting a dynamic, non-linear seismic evaluation of the Plutonium Facility (see 1/15/2016 weekly) as well as ongoing facility upgrades.

Plutonium Facility–Safety Basis: Last Friday, LANL submitted to the NNSA Field Office for review and approval, a request for either closure or extension of the safety basis addendum for exceedance of seismic performance goals (see 2/1/2013 weekly). The current approved and implemented addendum is scheduled to expire on March 1, 2016. LANL notes in the request that all actions directed by NNSA in the Safety Evaluation Report approving the addendum have been completed and documented in other correspondence with the exception of planned Plutonium Facility structural upgrades. LANL submits that once these upgrades are made the Plutonium Facility will meet its required seismic performance goals. LANL's request cites a report developed by the Plutonium Facility Seismic Expert Panel (see 8/14/15 weekly) that made similar conclusions. These upgrades are currently scheduled to be completed by the end of fiscal year 2017.

Plutonium Facility–Restart Activities: Last Friday, the Contractor Readiness Assessment (CRA) team completed their review of the Muffle Furnace, Plutonium Casting, and Advanced Recovery and Integrated Extraction System operations. The CRA team identified three pre-start findings that included (1) inconsistent implementation of criticality safety requirements and steps that could not be performed as written in the procedures used, (2) failure of a criticality safety evaluation document to identify potential upset conditions, and (3) inconsistent and incomplete implementation of site requirements for procedure development. The team also identified two post-start findings relating to conduct of operations and technical safety requirement implementation. Overall the team concluded that subject to satisfactory resolution of the pre-start findings, LANL has demonstrated its readiness for equipment, procedures, and personnel to support these operations.

NNSA Field Office–Staffing Plan: On Thursday, the NNSA Field Office facility representative team supervisor submitted the fiscal year 2016 facility representative staffing plan to the Field Office Manager for review and approval. The plan identified the need for 14 full time facility representatives. This number is down from the identified need of 16 facility representatives in the fiscal year 2015 plan due to the transfer of oversight of waste management operations to the newly established EM Field Office. Currently the NNSA Field Office has six qualified facility representatives assigned in the field with two additional facility representatives in training.