

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

February 5, 2016

MEMORANDUM FOR: S.A. Stokes, Technical Director
FROM: R.K. Verhaagen and J.W. Plaue
SUBJECT: Los Alamos Report for Week Ending February 5, 2016

DNFSB Staff Activity: On Wednesday, P.J. Foster, M.R. Bradisse, and, M.T. Wright conducted a closeout call with NNSA Field Office and LANL management regarding their recent review of the 90 percent safety basis for the new Transuranic Waste Facility.

Management: On Wednesday, the LANL Director announced an organizational change placing responsibility for the laboratory's activities covered by the new Legacy Cleanup Bridge Contract under the newly assigned LANL Deputy Director, Rick Kacich. The new organization will be called the Associate Director for Environmental Management and consist entirely of the existing Associate Director for Environmental Programs, including its current leadership team.

Area G–Inappropriately Remediated Nitrate Salts (RNS): Senior leadership from the EM Field Office and LANL recently chartered a number of joint federal-contractor integrated project teams (IPT) to facilitate integration and more timely action associated with improving the safety posture and ultimately completing the render-safe treatment of the RNS waste. The IPTs consist of a core IPT responsible for execution of work, a senior IPT for decision-making, and a champions forum to include participation from key NNSA and DOE-EM Headquarters personnel.

On Wednesday, LANL transmitted a strategy for safe storage of the RNS waste to the EM and NNSA Field Offices for approval. The strategy, developed by the senior IPT, outlines steps to be taken to: (1) enhance the venting capacity for the RNS containers in order to strengthen the safety posture of the waste as it awaits treatment; (2) improve the understanding of the wildland fire hazard; and (3) elevate the conduct of operations for the Area G workforce in preparation for installation of the enhanced venting and final treatment activities.

Area G–Safety Basis: Last week, the NNSA Field Office unconditionally approved LANL's request for a temporary modification to the Technical Safety Requirements to allow specific exceptions to the Limiting Condition for Operation 3.0.4. The change allows the conduct of activities that were previously prohibited under WARM STANDBY mode, but are viewed as contributing to the safety of the situation for four outstanding Potential Inadequacies of the Safety Analysis (PISA). The exceptions include: various activities associated with the unremediated nitrate salts; non-destructive assay of containers in support of resolving the material-at-risk discrepancy; preparing and offsite shipping of low-level waste; various activities in support of regulatory compliance; and doublepacking transuranic waste containers as previously committed to in response to a separate PISA declared in December 2014.

On Thursday, the NNSA Field Office transmitted to LANL management the NNSA Headquarters approval of the May 2015 exemption request for the lack of automatic fire extinguishment systems in a number of Area G facilities, as required by DOE Order 420.1B, *Facility Safety*. NNSA included 11 conditions of approval for this exemption.