

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

July 1, 2016

TO: Steven Stokes, Technical Director
FROM: Dermot Winters, WIPP Cognizant Engineer
SUBJECT: Waste Isolation Pilot Plant Activity Report for June 2016

DNFSB Staff Activity: C. March was onsite June 6-10 for a Fire Protection (FP) workshop and to assess FP improvements. During June 20-24, T. Hunt, S. Seprish and B. Sharpless were onsite conducting a maintenance review and M. Helfrich, J. Deplitch, D. minnema and A. Hutain were onsite observing the Annual Emergency Response exercise. A. Gwal, P. Foster and O. Johnson were onsite during June 27-30 performing an electrical power review. R. Quirk was onsite during both June 20-24 and June 27-30 performing site-rep-like duties. Oversight has averaged 3.3 man-weeks per month during FY 2016.

Fire Protection (FP). During June 6-10 staff observed a FP workshop and performed an FP status review. Workshop participants updated the WIPP Fire Protection Program, Underground Life Safety Equivalency, and Underground Full Fire Suppression Exemption documents for submittal to DOE for approval. Based on discussion with DOE and contractor personnel and walkdowns of facilities, the FP program, although still needing additional improvement, appears to be making progress. The staff will continue to track the improvement process.

Maintenance Review. During June 20-24, staff assessed the current status of the WIPP maintenance program. Several corrective actions and program improvements appear to still be evolving and will require continuing attention by the contractor. The staff plans to review additional documents prior to reaching definitive conclusions on those areas where implementation challenges remain in preparing for upcoming readiness reviews.

Emergency Response Exercise. During June 20-24, staff observed activities related to the site-wide annual emergency response exercise. Areas that appeared to have improved since the 2014 fire and rad release events included actions by underground workers and responders, CMR operator and facility shift manager, ICP incident commander and supporting Fire Department and protective force personnel as well as meaningful and appropriate feedback provided by the contractor's Management Self-Assessment Team. Observed inadequacies included a lack of a unified command between the CMR and ICP, poor above ground radiological control practices, delayed treatment and evacuation of casualties, immature survey and monitoring techniques by field teams, examples of poor exercise control and inadequate training of controllers and evaluators. Additional follow-on evaluations are planned.

National TRU Program (NTP) Enhancements Review. Staff tasked with assessing NTP progress in instituting enhanced processes to ensure TRU waste is properly characterized and certified before shipment to WIPP, held a June 16 meeting and a June 23 teleconference with CBFO NTP managers to begin to assess that progress.