

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

August 5, 2016

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

DNFSB Staff Activity: During July 12-13, M. Forsbacka observed a progress meeting in Oak Ridge, TN on the design of the planned Permanent Ventilation System. C. March was onsite at WIPP July 20-28 conducting a Fire Protection review. July 18-22, T. Battaglia was onsite completing MSHA 40-hour mineworker training and July 24-28, D. Burnfield was onsite completing training required for access to contaminated areas in the underground. R. Quirk was onsite July 11-15 and July 25-29 performing oversight duties. The staff has averaged 3.5 man-weeks per month of onsite oversight during FY 2016.

Permanent Ventilation System (PVS) Design. July 12-13, a staff member observed a PVS progress meeting in Oak Ridge, TN. DOE and NWP committed to having the normal mode of operation for the PVS to be filtration mode with a total capacity of 540,000 cubic feet per minute. Of note, the system will include a bypass function that can be manually activated to allow for unfiltered flow in the event it is needed to allow workers to safely evacuate in the event of an underground fire. A 30% design review meeting is scheduled for late August.

National TRU Program (NTP) Enhancements Review. July 12-13, staff members conducted a walk down of the waste stored in the WIPP Waste Handling Building (WHB) and held discussions on the process to validate the previously certified waste of the the seven WHB waste streams. Staff will continue that process as more information becomes available.

Maintenance. A July 19 teleconference was held by the staff as follow-up to a June onsite review. Discussions with NWP personnel and CBFO staff covered Safety Significant corrective and preventive maintenance backlog, manufacturer's recommendations for surface and underground mobile equipment, assignment of cognizant system engineers and closure packages for Accident Investigation Board Justification of Needs (JONs). A follow-on onsite review is planned for mid-August.

Fire Protection. July 20-28, a staff member conducted a fire protection status review including a walkdown of contaminated areas in the WIPP underground to assess combustible loadings. Isolated unnecessary combustibles were observed, but not significant quantities. Overall, although additional work is still needed, the site fire protection posture continues to improve. The staff will continue to assess improvements.

Roof Bolt Plate Fall. On July 28 the base plate of an installed roof bolt fell in a high occupancy area of the WIPP underground. The event was classified as a "near miss" and was the second recent plate fall in this same area. A staff member, while onsite in early August, will assess corrective actions taken by NWP in response to the event.