

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

November 1, 2024

TO: Timothy J. Dwyer, Technical Director
FROM: Daniel B. Bullen, Ph.D., P.E., Cognizant Engineer
SUBJECT: Sandia National Laboratories (SNL) Report for October 2024

Auxiliary Hot Cell Facility (AHCF) Basis for Interim Operations (BIO): On October 7, 2024, the Sandia Field Office (SFO) approved the proposed changes to the AHCF safety basis documents in the 2024 Annual Update via a Safety Evaluation Report Addendum. National Technology and Engineering Solutions of Sandia, LLC (NTESS) provided the proposed page changes to the AHCF BIO that included no changes to the Technical Safety Requirements. SFO reviewed the proposed page changes for the annual update along with the supporting unreviewed safety question determinations and had no comments but noted that the BIO continues to provide reasonable assurance of adequate protection to the workers, the public, and the environment. SFO identified no conditions of approval and directed NTESS to implement the updated AHCF safety basis documents within 120 calendar days.

First Quarter Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Startup Notification Report (SNR): On October 16, 2024, SFO approved the first quarter FY 2025 SNR. In the approval correspondence, SFO noted that field office staff members plan to observe the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) Mobile Loading Unit (MLU) hoisting activities for the shipment of Plutonium Isentropic Compressions Experiments (Pu-ICE) chambers during the week of October 21, 2024. SFO previously agreed that no readiness activity was required because each experiment chamber contains less than Hazard Category 3 quantities present in the loading area and any other materials will be in Type B containers and excluded from the material-at-risk (MAR). The material from this activity will be sent to the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) where it will be processed for shipment to WIPP.

Shipment of Pu-ICE Chambers: During the week of October 21, 2024, Technical Area V (TA-V) staff provided support to WIPP Central Characterization Program staff as they loaded standard waste boxes containing Pu-ICE chambers into Transuranic Package Transporter - Model 2 (TRUPACT-II) containers in TA-V. The shipment included six standard waste boxes (SWB) containing Pu-ICE chambers and six dunnage SWBs, one each in six TRUPACT-II shipping containers. The key activities TA-V personnel executed in support of WIPP MLU operations included managing (handling, moving, storing, etc.) radioactive material/waste, operating forklifts, assisting lifts of MAR, providing utilities to activities in the loading area, and coordinating with non-TA-V organizations and workers (e.g., fire protection and facilities management). On October 24, 2024, the TRUPACT-II shipments departed TA-V destined for LANL.

Corrective Action Plan (CAP) in Response to an Independent Assessment of the SNL Emergency Management Program: NTESS submitted a CAP to SFO to address the NTESS findings and deficiencies identified in the Department of Energy Office of Enterprise Assessment *Final Report-Independent Assessment of the Emergency Management Program at Sandia National Laboratories - New Mexico – August 2024*. (See SNL Monthly Reports for August 2024 and September 2024). The CAP addressed the NTESS findings and deficiencies associated with exercise planning and execution, emergency plan updates, and hazard identification. NTESS established due dates for each corrective action, most of which are scheduled to be completed by early calendar year 2025.