

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

January 3, 2025

**TO:** R. T. Davis, Acting Technical Director  
**FROM:** A. Boussouf, Cognizant Engineer  
**SUBJECT:** Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) Report for December 2024

**DNFSB Staff Activity.** The Board's WIPP cognizant engineer held weekly meetings to maintain awareness of mining and waste handling activities. The cognizant engineer and technical staff members conducted a site visit from December 3 to 5, 2024.

S. Abdi and A. Velazquez-Lozada were onsite to gather information related to two upcoming DNFSB reviews. The staff team visited the Safety Significant Confinement Ventilation System (SSCVS) project site, the Central Monitoring Room, the Contact-Handled Bay, and the Utility Shaft. The staff team met with Salado Isolation Mining Contractors (SIMCO) personnel to discuss status updates on upcoming safety basis changes, SSCVS readiness assessment plans, and critical decision 4. The team also visited the Carlsbad Field Office (CBFO) to meet with CBFO management, attended the event learning review following a mining incident (see WIPP Monthly for November 2024), and toured the TRANSCOM communications center, DOE's satellite tracking and communications facility for monitoring radioactive material shipments. A. Boussouf and D. Brown also completed turnover of cognizant engineer duties.

**Safety Basis.** On November 5, CBFO approved revision 10 of the WIPP documented safety analysis and technical safety requirements. This revision contains changes related to operation of the SSCVS in HEPA filtration mode. Future revisions will incorporate the operation of the salt reduction building in filtration mode, continuous air monitoring in the underground, and the connection of the utility shaft to the mine. SIMCO's tentative plan is to begin the independent verification review of revision 10 by the end of January 2025.

**Mining Incident.** On December 3, during night shift, a subcontractor engaged in the Salt Loading Refurbishment project was removing bolts and chain link from the mine rib. During this activity, a subcontractor worker, inside a forklift basket attachment, was using a cutting torch to remove bolts when a roof plate popped off the bolt. The roof plate then fell and struck the man basket, hit the operator's cab, and shattered the tempered glass window. No personnel were injured. The incident was reported to management and documented in the night shift turnover report. The incident was not immediately reported to the central monitoring room, as required. SIMCO and subcontractor personnel held an incident investigation where it was determined that the job hazard analysis needed to be updated to account for additional hazards.

**Planned Maintenance Outage.** On December 19, WIPP halted waste receiving in preparation for the annual maintenance outage period from January 5 to early March. During this outage, the site plans to install the ventilation wye ducting with a blank flange to the SSCVS, complete the Salt Loading Pocket Refurbishment project, and complete additional mining and preventative maintenance activities across the site.