

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

November 17, 2017

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** S.A. Stokes, Technical Director

**FROM:** J.W. Plaue

**SUBJECT:** Los Alamos Report for Week Ending November 17, 2017

**DNFSB Activity:** On Tuesday, Board Member Santos called a staff member at the EM Field Office to discuss questions related to the extent of condition for a fire protection issue described in the Board's letter regarding the Transuranic Waste Facility dated November 9, 2017.

**DNFSB Staff Activity:** On Thursday, A.R. Powers, P.J. Migliorini, and M.T. Wright held a teleconference with the NNSA Field Office to discuss observations from the first phase of the safety posture review of the Plutonium Facility.

**Transuranic Waste Management:** On Tuesday, Plutonium Facility waste management personnel successfully utilized the mobile loading unit to prepare a shipment of six drums of waste from the Offsite Source Recovery Program for transport to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP). This represents the first shipment from LANL since WIPP resumed waste receipt operations. Last week, LANL personnel had planned on shipping a larger number of drums that included some sent to TA-55 from Area G; however, that effort was challenged with issues concerning safeguards, procedures, and unfavorable weather conditions. In particular, weather restrictions related to temperature and wind speed significantly constrain the use of the mobile loading unit in LANL's climate.

Re-establishing a reliable transuranic waste shipping capability remains essential to risk reductions activities across LANL. For example, the limited availability of safety controls for the aboveground inventory means that disposition to WIPP is the primary risk-reduction method for Area G. Similarly, LANL's forecast indicates that waste generation at the Plutonium Facility will be dominated for about the next decade by the disposition of legacy residues and contaminated equipment. LANL personnel are currently analyzing options for restoring operations at the RANT Shipping Facility or establishing an alternative capability.

**Unremediated Nitrate Salt (UNS) Waste Treatment-Readiness Activities:** Last Thursday, the Waste Characterization, Reduction, and Repackaging Facility (WCRRF) entered COLD STANDBY mode after the last daughter drums from the remediated nitrate salt waste treatment campaign were shipped to Area G. The mode change facilitates an ongoing outage to complete a number of maintenance activities and prepare the facility for the UNS campaign. In particular, WCRRF personnel plan to remove the large refrigerator unit and change the flasks on the water delivery system for the processing glovebox. They currently plan to commence UNS liner-pull activities and treatment at the end of this month.

**Weapons Engineering Tritium Facility:** Last Thursday, the NNSA Field Office directed LANL management to provide for concurrence a plan to either replace the existing Halon fire suppression system in the operations center or submit an appropriate exemption/equivalency for the system. This action should solidify a path forward for the existing system, which was downgraded from safety significant in July 2016 and is nearing its end-of-life.