

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

August 3, 2018

TO: Christopher J. Roscetti, Technical Director
FROM: Alexander Velazquez-Lozada, Cognizant Engineer
SUBJECT: Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) Report for July 2018

DNFSB Staff Activity: R. Quirk visited the site for routine oversight. A Velazquez-Lozada visited the site to complete the General Employee Training. Staff oversight during FY-2018 has averaged to 1.96 person-weeks/month.

Implementation Validation Review (IVR). An IVR team was assembled by NWP to assess the proper implementation of major changes in Revision 6a of the Documented Safety Analysis (DSA) and Technical Specific Requirements (TSR). The team was formed by members with more than 25 years of experience in defense nuclear facilities oversight and with a diverse background, including computer science, engineering, and business administration. The IVR team interviewed multiple personnel, reviewed the Safety Basis Implementation Matrix, and observed waste download/emplacement activities. The IVR team identified 7 findings and 5 opportunities for improvement. The finding and opportunities for improvement are related to the adequacy of implementing the training for DSA and TSR Revision 6a and the flow down of new requirements through the implementing documents. One of the first actions taken by NWP after the review was to ensure all personnel had taken the DSA and TSR Revision 6a training. At the end of the month, Revision 6a of the DSA and TSR were declared implemented. The Board's staff has requested a copy of the IVR Final Report.

Underground Ventilation. As reported last month, CBFO sent a letter on May 17th directing NWP to address several problems with underground air quality. CBFO also directed NWP to verify that the direction of air flow is in compliance with the Mine Ventilation Plan for specific ventilation systems configurations for the underground. As part of the response, NWP collected various data sets of the underground ventilation conditions. CBFO identified problems with the data collected by NWP. One of the problems was that NWP did not control the configuration of the ventilation systems while taking data. This caused the data to be invalid. In addition, CBFO identified inconsistencies regarding how NWP took the air flow measurements. In another set of data, CBFO noted that air flow direction was not consistent with the direction specified in the Mine Ventilation Plan. As a consequence, NWP is implementing corrective actions to collect new sets of data and to develop a new procedure to control the configuration of the ventilation systems.

Waste Management. WIPP continued to receive shipments from Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) with elevated radiological readings of swipe samples upon opening the shipping container. The Board's staff is coordinating an interface with DOE to discuss the WIPP Waste Acceptance Criteria (WAC) for external contamination, associated limiting conditions of operation, and the path forward to deal with these ORNL shipments as well as future shipments with elevated radiological readings.

Mining. NWP stopped mining in panel 8 to allocate resources to address ground control issues in other areas of the plant. NWP plans to resume mining in September 2018.