

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

November 6, 2020

**TO:** Christopher J. Roscetti, Technical Director  
**FROM:** Daniel B. Bullen, Ph.D., P.E., Cognizant Engineer  
**SUBJECT:** Sandia National Laboratories (SNL) Report for October 2020

**COVID-19 Response:** During October 2020, the Sandia Field Office (SFO) and National Technology and Engineering Solutions of Sandia, LLC (NTESS) remained in Phase 2 of their return-to-site plans. Phase 2 includes a majority of the SFO and SNL staff continuing to telework in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Safety Evaluation Report (SER) Addendum for the Annual Update to the Auxiliary Hot Cell Facility (AHCF) Basis for Interim Operation (BIO):** On October 1, 2020, SFO approved the Safety Basis Annual Update to the AHCF BIO (Change Notice 13). SFO reviewed the proposed page changes for the BIO and the Technical Safety Requirements (TSR) along with the supporting Unreviewed Safety Question Determinations and Screens for the AHCF Safety Basis 2020 Annual Update. SFO provided comments and reviewed the comment responses from NTESS. Based on the satisfactory response to comments, SFO approved the submittal with one Condition of Approval (COA). The COA requires “Organization 1300 to coordinate with the Emergency Management Organization and formally provide a more comprehensive approach to the implementation of protective actions such as evacuation and shelter in place for accidents at Technical Area V.” SFO noted that the COA shall be completed by November 30, 2020. In addition, SFO noted that the AHCF continues to provide reasonable assurance of adequate protection to the workers, the public, and the environment from the identified hazards and meets the requirements specified in 10 CFR 830, Subpart B, *Safety Basis Requirements*. SFO directed NTESS to implement this annual update to the safety basis within 120 days.

**Plan of Action (POA) for the Federal Readiness Assessment (FRA) for In-Service Fuel Cladding Inspections at the Annular Core Research Reactor Facility (ACRRF):** On October 4, 2020, SFO issued their POA for the FRA for in-service fuel cladding inspections at the ACRRF. The scope of the POA is to evaluate the readiness to perform the inspection of in-service fuel elements in the ACRR and the Fuel-Ringed External Cavity-Version II (FREC-II) to provide monitoring of the health and condition of the cladding for each fuel element. The FRA will verify readiness to start fuel cladding inspection and evaluation activities at the ACRRF. The POA specified the Core Requirements that define the scope and breadth of the FRA, and identified the prerequisites and projected dates for performing the FRA. The POA noted that the FRA will assess the equipment, personnel, safety features, operating procedures, safety and support systems, and the adequacy of prior assessments (Management Self-Assessment and Contractor Readiness Assessment) and readiness preparations. The FRA will be the first Federal readiness activity conducted at Technical Area V (TA-V) since September 2018. In their POA Scope, SFO noted improvements in the operations at TA-V over the last few years that provided the Field Office with sufficient confidence in the ability of the TA-V management to achieve readiness and conduct an effective Contractor Readiness Assessment. The FRA is projected to start February 1, 2021.

**Completion of High-Priority Programmatic Experiments in the ACRRF:** On October 28, 2020, ACRRF staff completed the last of the planned high-priority programmatic experiments. Program scientists are reviewing the experimental data to determine if additional operations are needed prior to terminating the Justification for Continued Operations. The ACRRF staff continues preparations for the readiness assessments for in-service fuel element inspections.