

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

February 4, 2022

**TO:** Christopher J. Roscetti, Technical Director  
**FROM:** Alexander Velazquez-Lozada, Cognizant Engineer  
**SUBJECT:** Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) Report for January 2022

**DNFSB Staff Activity.** The Board's staff participated in regular conference calls to maintain cognizance of site activities.

**WIPP Operations.** The increase in COVID-19 cases at the site has caused a shortage of Nuclear Waste Partnership, LLC (NWP), personnel in the areas of mining, radiological-control, and maintenance. Carlsbad Field Office (CBFO) personnel continue to maximize the use of telework and provide on-site oversight for critical activities as necessary. NWP reduced the rate at which shipments are received at the site to address issues related to waste handling personnel not following procedures (see Monthly Report of December 2021). NWP plans to increase the rate of shipments again by March 2022.

**Underground Ventilation System.** NWP resumed operation of the unfiltered 700C fan on January 14<sup>th</sup>, after performing two test programs last year to ensure safety and operability of the fan and performing an airflow balance of the underground ventilation system (see Monthly Reports of April 2021 and November 2021). Shortly after restarting the fan, pieces of metal were ejected from the fan-exhaust. NWP shutdown the fan and after further evaluation found that these pieces of metal were from the silencer-baffle downstream from the fan. NWP started repairs and continues to evaluate the operation of the 700C fan.

**Required Training per Hazardous Waste Facility Permit (HWFP).** On January 6<sup>th</sup>, NWP initiated non-compliance reports after discovering that WIPP personnel had failed to meet training requirements established in the HWFP. Training coordinators and managers were notified. Managers instructed affected personnel to complete required training as soon as possible. All personnel listed completed their respective trainings. Personnel that worked unsupervised while performing HWFP duties and with their training lapsed would constitute a separate non-compliance with the HWFP. For that reason, NWP performed a review of the work that personnel performed and confirmed that personnel were supervised while performing HWFP duties.

**Conduct of Operations.** On January 18<sup>th</sup>, NWP reported that during preparation of a contact-handled (CH) package for empty shipment, personnel found multiple parts installed in the wrong positions. The facility shift manager was notified. NWP management paused work to determine the path forward and conduct an event learning review.

On January 3<sup>rd</sup>, NWP reported that two maintenance supervisors proceeded to replace two fuses in the Air Intake Shaft (ASI) Hoist without following the Hazardous Energy Control process. The report noted that both supervisors were trained and cognizant of the associated hazards and required controls. After being notified, the facility operations manager directed the performance of an event learning review. Subsequently, NWP implemented corrective actions, performed a pre-operational verification, and returned the AIS Hoist to service.