

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

January 1, 2016

TO: Steven A. Stokes, Technical Director
FROM: John R. Mercier, Cognizant Engineer
SUBJECT: Sandia National Laboratories Report for December 2015

Staff Activity at Sandia National Laboratories (SNL): There were no onsite Board staff reviews or oversight visits in December.

Fission Products in Reactor Pool Water. The Annular Core Research Reactor (ACRR) staff continued their investigation to identify the source of fission products at trace levels in the reactor pool water. They reported that their underwater video inspection of the reactor core did not identify any compromised fuel elements. They reported that their pool water sampling results confirm trace amounts of fission products are being produced during reactor operations but were not conclusive in identifying the source of the fission products. The ACRR staff presented the results of their investigation to the ACRR Committee and the Nuclear Facilities Safety Committee. Both Committees reviewed the available data and opined that the trace fission products were not the result of a fuel element leak. Both Committees opined that the existence of trace amount of fission products in the pool water should not prevent resumption of ACRR programmatic operations. The decision to resume ACRR programmatic operations resides with SNL executive management.

SNL Closure: Since SNL remains open for several federal holidays throughout the year, it is able to close for an extended period at the end of the year. This year, SNL closure dates are December 25, 2015 to January 4, 2016.