

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

March 2, 2018

**TO:** Steven A. Stokes, Technical Director  
**FROM:** Christina T. Beaty, Cognizant Engineer  
**SUBJECT:** Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) Report for February 2018

**DNFSB Staff Activity:** R. Quirk completed two staff visits to WIPP for routine oversight and a national transuranic waste program workshop. L. Schleicher completed WIPP's inexperienced miner training. Staff oversight during FY-2018 has averaged 2.0 person-weeks/month.

**Safety Basis.** Carlsbad Field Office (CBFO) approved the safety evaluation report, and transmitted the Department Of Energy's contingent approval for Documented Safety Analysis (DSA) and Technical Safety Requirements revision 6.

**Underground Ventilation System (UVS) Series 860 Mine Fan Reliability.** The 860 fan maintenance has been an ongoing issue (tracked in monthly reports since July) due to WIPP's ineffectiveness in addressing key maintenance issues. Most recently, WIPP is experiencing issues with the breaker racking apparatus and outlet damper position indication for the 860B/860C fans respectively.

**Mining Operations.** The facility swapped their schedule and now focusses on ground control during the day shift and waste emplacement on the second shift. Nuclear Waste Partnership, LLC (NWP), entered the E-300 exhaust drift to perform ground control operations in the high contamination area/airborne radioactivity area toward the south end of the exhaust drift, at the intersection just east of Panel 7. These ground control operations will permit NWP to install cribbing so the south end of the mine can be properly closed. Additionally, NWP miners continued ground control actions at night in conjunction with waste placement operations in the active disposal room, Panel 7 Room 5.

The supplemental ventilation system fan is running and mining of panel 8 has recommenced. NWP is working on options for dealing with the increased salt dust during mining, which is reducing visibility and posing a challenge for the mining personnel.

**Central Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS).** The site backed out of the planned UPS replacement due to errors in the associated design change package. Although the UPS is not credited as safety class or safety significant, it provides power to what the DSA describes as essential loads, including the Central Monitoring System used by operators in the Central Monitoring Room and the site-wide public address (PA) system used to notify personnel of emergency conditions and responses. The work package failed to provide appropriate compensatory actions for the loss of the PA system.