

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

May 6, 2022

TO: Christopher J. Roscetti, Technical Director
FROM: Erin A. McCullough, Cognizant Engineer
SUBJECT: Idaho National Laboratory (INL) Report for April 2022

DNFSB Staff Activity. The Vice Chair of the Board, Executive Director of Operations, and two technical staff members visited INL in April for site familiarity and oversight activities. The Flammable Gas and Reactive Metal Hazards of Solid Waste Review Team further investigated potential hazards at INL facilities since the April 2018 drum over-pressurization event in the Accelerated Retrieval Project V facility, and held a close-out discussion on April 5, 2022, with Department of Energy Idaho Operations Office and contractor staff to discuss their observations. A technical staff member virtually attended the Idaho Cleanup Project Citizens Advisory Board (ICP CAB) Meeting on April 26, 2022.

COVID-19 Update. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention COVID Data Tracker shows that all counties near INL facilities have “Low” COVID-19 Community Levels.

Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Enterprise Assessments’ (EA) Report on Emergency Management at INL. The annual site-level exercise took place at INL on October 12, 2021. Appraisers from DOE EA reviewed the emergency management program and observed the emergency management exercise at INL, publishing their findings in an April 2022 report titled *Independent Assessment of Emergency Management at the Idaho National Laboratory*. This report presented two negative “findings.” First, the report stated that Battelle Energy Alliance, LLC (BEA), “did not demonstrate an effective emergency operations system that validates and coordinates incident information to establish and maintain situational awareness and a common operating picture among response components.” Second, the report explained that BEA “did not demonstrate a reliable and effective information management system to support emergency response operations.” INL management plans to address these findings and other “weaknesses in the INL emergency management program” with a corrective action report and additional training. The next site-level exercise is on June 15, 2022.

Accelerated Retrieval Project (ARP) Progress. The ARP aspect of the Radioactive Waste Management Complex completed exhumation of targeted waste in all nine facilities on December 6, 2021. The final drum of exhumed waste was processed on March 14, 2022. Currently, the ARP IV and V facilities are in a post-operations phase and are preparing for future demolition in accordance with a phased approach. This phased approach includes removing all components of the operation, removing contamination from the building airlock and inner surfaces, adding multiple soil layers over contaminated soils, laying the facilities down to ground level, and applying a protective evapotranspiration clay cap. Two previous ARP facilities are already completely demolished and buried in the Surface Disposal Area.

Integrated Waste Treatment Unit (IWTU) is Restarting. After an outage during this past March and April, IWTU will begin heat up in early May. Once heat-up commences, it will be approximately two weeks before IWTU begins processing simulant material. The tentative start date for the Contractor Readiness Assessment for Radiological Operations is mid-to-late June.