

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

December 2, 2022

**TO:** Katherine R. Herrera, Acting Technical Director  
**FROM:** Alexander Velazquez-Lozada, Cognizant Engineer  
**SUBJECT:** Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) Report for November 2022

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

**WIPP Transition to a New Contractor.** The transition to the new WIPP Management and Operating contractor began on Monday, November 14<sup>th</sup>. The new contractor is The Tularosa Basin Range Services (TBRs), a consortium of Bechtel National, Inc., with Los Alamos Technical Associates (LATA) as a small business teaming subcontractor. The new contractor is expected to assume full responsibility for WIPP management and operation at the end of the 90-day transition period. As part of the transition, the new contractor will submit within 75 days to Carlsbad Field Office (CBFO) a report summarizing their review of the WIPP site's systems, conditions, and compliance with requirements.

**Automatic Fire Suppression Systems (AFSS) in Vehicles Used in the Underground.** As reported in the October 2022 WIPP Monthly Report, Nuclear Waste Partnership, LLC (NWP), issued a timely order preventing use of any underground vehicles equipped with a specific brand of AFSS. CBFO completed their review of NWP's Evaluation of the Safety of the Situation and accepted the proposed changes to controls. The changes include the expansion of the definition of "operable" in the Technical Safety Requirements and modified Surveillance Requirements.

**Waste Management.** NWP emplaced the last waste containers in Panel 7 on Thursday, October 20<sup>th</sup>. NWP temporarily closed Room 1 with chain link and a brattice cloth. NWP emplaced the first waste containers in Panel 8 on Wednesday, November 9<sup>th</sup>.

As reported in the October 2022 WIPP Monthly Report, NWP resumed receipt of shipments from Idaho National Laboratory (INL). However, until further investigation by INL is completed, WIPP will not receive super-compacted containers involving the BN510 waste stream.

**Emergency Preparedness.** As reported in the September 2022 WIPP Monthly Report, NWP conducted the annual emergency exercise on September 14<sup>th</sup>, with full participation of federal, state, and local first responders. NWP reported that 6 of 48 objectives were not met. NWP identified issues with triage techniques, communication at the incident command post, and adherence to procedures. NWP also identified opportunities for improvement during the planning phase and initial communications of the exercise. Overall, the exercise was evaluated as successful by the evaluation team.

**Air Intake Shaft (AIS) Hoist.** As reported in the June 2022 Monthly Report, the AIS hoist was out of service. During this reporting period, the AIS hoist was returned to service following completion of a shaft inspection, a required non-destructive evaluation of the hoist rope, and preventative maintenance.