

Testimony of Mr. Bob McQuinn
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Before the
Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board
Waste Isolation Pilot Plant Public Hearing
Walter Gerrells Performing Arts & Exhibition Center
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Session 2

Good afternoon, Vice Chairman. I am Bob McQuinn, Nuclear Waste Partnership (NWP) President and Project Manager. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to address you today regarding the safety basis strategy for recovery operations and upgrades.

The safety basis strategy for recovery operations and upgrades involves three major elements:

- Continued use of DOE-approved Evaluations of the Safety of the Situation or ESS for ongoing recovery operations;
- Revision of existing ESSs and development of new ESSs for new recovery operations scope. New recovery operations scope includes the construction and installation of an interim ventilation system and a supplemental ventilation system;
- Development of a comprehensive Revision 5 to the WIPP Documented Safety Analysis (DSA) and WIPP Technical Safety Requirements.

Shortly after arriving at WIPP, I strengthened the nuclear safety function by moving the Engineering organization to become a direct report to me and by reaching back corporately to bring an experienced nuclear safety manager to WIPP. Everything we have done to stabilize the plant and progress through recovery has benefitted from the strong leadership of my new safety basis manager.

The revised DSA will incorporate lessons learned from the WIPP underground fire and radiological release events, inadequacies identified in Accident Investigation Board reports, planned site recovery activities and equipment modifications, and return to normal operations. Until implementation of DSA/TSR Revision 5, ESS's will continue to be utilized for continued recovery operations.

The DSA revision will use DOE Standard 3009-2014. A workshop was conducted in March that included

DOE Headquarters, CBFO, NWP and the DNFSB to ensure a coordinated implementation of the new standard using the In-Process Review concept authorized in DOE Standard 1104. Subject matter experts from both NWP and DOE will continue to engage on the issues, and participate in real time reviews of documents as development of revision 5 of the WIPP DSA proceeds.

In terms of facility upgrades, two enhancements to existing ventilation are planned, a skid-mounted interim ventilation system and an underground supplemental ventilation system. We will assure that safety considerations are appropriately addressed early in these projects.

While available ventilation will be enhanced through these planned modifications, it will remain limited relative to the capacity needed for full operations. Thus, a new permanent ventilation system is planned. When this system becomes operational, a subsequent revision to the DSA will support a return to full operations.

For the permanent ventilation system, alternative design options have been evaluated, and two are being advanced as likely candidates for a final design. DOE Standard 1189-2008 is being implemented to ensure safety is integrated into the design. The permanent ventilation system is in the initial stage of the project and is being executed in accordance with DOE Order 413.3B.