

Testimony of Mr. Joe Franco
Carlsbad Field Office

Before the
Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board
Waste Isolation Pilot Plant Public Hearing
Walter Gerrells Performing Arts & Exhibition Center
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Session 3

Good evening, Vice Chairman, I am Joe Franco, Manager of the Carlsbad Field Office. Thank you for the opportunity to address you today. This session focusses on emergency management and response and the nuclear safety basis for recovery activities. I am here to review the actions that have been taken or are planned to correct Emergency Management Program deficiencies.

Immediately after the February events, an independent assessment of the Emergency Management Program was performed, utilizing corporate reach back and subject matter experts across the DOE complex. Gaps identified from this assessment and findings from the Accident Investigation Board Fire and Radiological Release Phase I reports were consolidated to define the Corrective Action Plan required to establish a healthy and compliant emergency management program. The actions within the plan were subsequently approved by CBFO. In the interim, compensatory measures were put in place and are implemented through the use of Evaluations of the Safety of the Situation.

The Emergency Management Program has been restructured to align with current National Incident Management System and Incident Command System principles, concepts and terminology. This adoption allows for a well-managed and coordinated response, as well as seamless integration with external agencies that provide WIPP mutual-aid support. These changes also include restructuring the Emergency Operations Center staff positions, as well as a new training and qualification program for each position, which integrates Nuclear Waste Partnership's (NWP) and CBFO senior management into the process. In addition, there have been significant enhancements to assist emergency management decision-makers with emergency categorization and classification and timely emergency notifications to local, state and federal agencies. Furthermore, there has been a complete re-write of emergency management policies, emergency plans and procedures, as well as significant upgrades made to emergency equipment, systems and facilities to ensure an effective response and coordination for any

WIPP incident. Additionally, a revitalization of the emergency management drill and exercise program was completed to ensure consistency in drill and exercise planning, documentation, conduct and after-action reporting, which has significantly enhanced the overall quality and rigorousness of the program. The drill and exercise program in combination with self-assessments validate the adequacy of plans, procedures, training, equipment and systems and overall program health. The program enhancements to date are only a start in an ongoing cycle of preparedness that will drive continuous program improvements.

A Line Management Assessment of the program will be performed in the late May/early June timeframe. This assessment will validate completion of the Corrective Action Plan actions, as evidenced by the appropriate documentation. A Management Self-Assessment will be performed later in the summer. At the end of cold operations, a contractor Operational Readiness Review will be performed, followed by a DOE Operational Readiness Review. Successful completion of these reviews is required prior to commencement of waste emplacement activities.