

I would now like to provide some closing remarks.

First, I want to acknowledge the hospitality of the Los Alamos National Laboratory and local community. I would also like to thank our witnesses and all of the members of the public who participated in this meeting and hearing. I particularly want to thank the elected officials and other key members of the community who participated here today. An active community with engaged leaders is a vital part of any successful program of this nature.

The Los Alamos National Laboratory has a long-term mission with critical importance to our nation. Los Alamos is also a complex site that presents an array of safety challenges. To face these challenges, NNSA must ensure that the laboratory's nuclear facilities are equipped with effective safety controls that provide adequate protection of the public and workers.

The Board explored three topics of interest today: Plutonium Facility Seismic Safety, Emergency Preparedness, and Safety at LANL Defense Nuclear Facilities. The Board believes that no safety problem

in the NNSA complex is more pressing than the Plutonium Facility's vulnerability to a large earthquake. Today, NNSA and the contractor described their plans to fix weaknesses in the building's structure and to upgrade key safety systems so they can survive a large earthquake.

These plans are promising, and progress to date has been sound, but this work must continue to be executed with the utmost urgency to ensure adequate protection of the public and workers. From the Board's perspective, additional modeling and analysis will be required to ensure that all seismic vulnerabilities for the Plutonium Facility that can lead to its collapse or loss of confinement are fully addressed.

At this hearing, the Board has continued to engage DOE to better understand its regulatory framework for ensuring adequate protection of public and worker safety at its defense nuclear facilities. The Board is particularly concerned that NNSA has approved a 2008 Documented Safety Analysis and a 2011 Justification of Continuing Operations for its Plutonium Facility under circumstances where offsite does consequence

to the public exceed the Evaluation Guideline of 25 rem by one or more orders of magnitude.

The Board believes that a strong emergency preparedness and response program is critical at a site like Los Alamos where the hazards are significant and threats from natural disasters are inevitable. The Board recognizes the work that's been done to mitigate risks from wildland fires at Los Alamos, but priority for improving and maintaining these measures must be sustained even after the vivid memory of the most recent fire begins to fade. The Board also sees ample opportunity for the laboratory to improve its response planning for large or cascading events that could affect multiple nuclear facilities and impact critical infrastructure.

The Board believes that improving nuclear facility safety bases and strengthening formality of operations are two key steps needed to continue the safe operation of aging facilities until robust replacement facilities can be designed and constructed.

The record of this proceeding will remain open until December 19, 2011.

I would like to reiterate that the Board reserves its right to further schedule and regulate the course of this public meeting and hearing, to recess, reconvene, postpone, or adjourn this public meeting and hearing, and to otherwise exercise its authority under the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended.

This concludes this public meeting and hearing of the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board. We will recess now and take up at the call of the Chair if and when that becomes necessary.

Thank you.