

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

December 12, 1997

TO: G.W. Cunningham, Technical Director

FROM: P.F. Gubanc & D.G. Ogg, Hanford Site Representatives

SUBJ: Activity Report for Week Ending December 12, 1997

Board staff members Grover, Gwal, Wille, and Yeniscavich were on site December 8 - December 11 to review design issues related to the Spent Nuclear Fuel Project.

A. Spent Nuclear Fuel Project (SNFP): While Duke Engineering & Services Hanford (DESH) continues to make progress, many project activities are experiencing delays. The number and size of the delays that have developed in the last few weeks indicate the potential for further overall project delay. For example, there are delays, day-for-day schedule slips or holds on Multi-canister Overpack (MCO) basket fabrication, MCO Handling Machine design and fabrication, MCO Loadout System procurement, approval of safety documentation for K Basins, the Cold Vacuum Drying facility, and the Canister Storage Building, KW Basin construction activities, and others. We've seen little fundamental change within the DESH organization that might address these project difficulties. DOE-RL and Fluor Daniel Hanford (FDH) have stated similar concerns. Late this week, FDH issued a "cure" letter to DESH requesting that DESH propose significant corrective action or face possible contract termination.

B. Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP): Two additional criticality infractions at PFP this week have convinced DOE-RL to seek assistance in the area of criticality safety/conduct of operations. Jerry McKamy, EH-34, is expected to visit PFP next week and support DOE-RL line management's determination of operational readiness. The DOE-RL Readiness Assessment (RA) is on hold until this review is complete. FDH is looking for similar assistance but does not consider it necessary prior to the DOE-RL RA. Despite strong suggestions by DOE-RL, B&W Hanford (BWHC) is not yet unconvinced of the need for such support. Admittedly, PFP's self-identification and reporting of the two infractions reflects a decided improvement in behavior amongst PFP management.

C. Tank Waste Remediation System (TWRS): On January 12, 1998, Lockheed Martin Hanford (LMHC) is to deliver a formal verification of their ability to deliver feed to the TWRS privatization contractors in 2002. (Late delivery of feed would result in substantial penalties to DOE.) Obviously, this verification will be contingent upon the TWRS budget profile through 2002. Preliminary indications from LMHC are that the projected needs for TWRS may be significantly more than is currently planned (e.g., up to \$150M more in FY99). If this estimate is confirmed, major budgetary contests between TWRS, SNFP, and PFP can be expected for FY99 and beyond.

D. Congressional Staff Visit: The site representatives met and toured with Mr. Dwight Cates, Investigator for the House Committee on Commerce, during his review of the SNFP and TWRS.

cc: Board members