

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

December 12, 1997

TO: G. W. Cunningham, Technical Director
FROM: R. F. Warther, M. T. Sautman

SUBJ: RFETS Activity Report for Week Ending December 12, 1997

QA/QC. K-H personnel (contracting, project management and legal) met with RFEC this week to discuss the path forward for the QA/QC issues identified on site. RFEC committed to the following: (1) All jobs conducted by RFEC on site will be reinspected. This includes B371 and other nuclear facilities. RFEC will pay for these inspections. (2) The QC manager's office has been moved onsite (T549). (3) RFEC QA will review all IWCP packages. DynCorp will inspect QA hold points in parallel with RFEC QC inspections. (4) RFEC increased the QC staff size from two to four personnel. Additionally, they brought 5 people with about 25 years of experience each on site to mentor and oversee the QC inspectors. (5) QC now reports to a manager who reports to the President. QC reported to construction management previously. Several other actions were taken that were communicated to the Board staff last week.

Oral Qualification Boards. The Site Reps held discussions with the SSOC VP for Operations to discuss continuing issues with the Shift Manager and Shift Technical Advisor oral qualification boards. The VP for Operations stated that he or one of two other Vice Presidents intend to be voting members of all oral qualification boards for future qualifications. This has the potential to (1) increase consistency among boards across the site, and (2) increase the level of knowledge a candidate must achieve before attempting an oral qualification board. The first oral qualification board using this new protocol was held on Thursday 12/11. Although the site reps did not observe this board, feedback from those in attendance was that it was conducted very well and the candidate exhibited a high level of knowledge. Two more oral qualification boards are scheduled for next week. The Site Reps will observe both.

ISMS. The Site Reps attended portions of the RFFO/DOE-HQ discussions to prepare for the ISMS review in January. After getting off to a slow start, the review team and K-H presenters seemed to come to some resolutions regarding (1) how ISMS is practiced at the site, and (2) what the evaluators are attempting to review. Dan Burnfield, Monique Helfrich and OE Doug Volgeneau have drafted a more detailed report on this review.

Solutions. Draining began on the last two Pu solution tanks at RFETS. Approximately 950 liters (out of 2100 l) were drained from a criticality line tank in B371. The remaining solution will be drained as needed during 1998 to blend down high level solutions from B771. Draining also started on tank 1810 in B771. This tank contains approximately 135 liters of 140 g Pu/l solution. Draining was delayed a week because of a potential criticality infraction and the need to leak test and/or tighten several valves and a gasket suspected to be leaking.

Salt Pyro-oxidation. The RFFO Readiness Assessment found 15 pre-start and 14 post-start deficiencies, many dealing with the B707 infrastructure. The large number of findings caused RFFO to conclude that SSOC and K-H did not take the action to bring the facility into a condition of readiness. Recent readiness reviews appear to be used to achieve readiness rather than verify it. Shift Managers and Shift Technical Advisors were not found to have an adequate knowledge of the process to safely support the activity. Based on the number of similar procedural deficiencies found, the contractor appears to have made little progress resolving programmatic issues repeatedly identified in previous readiness reviews. Other pre-start findings addressed the Material at Risk program, formality of operations, and quality assurance.

Interactions with the Public. The Site Reps attended a public hearing where DOE solicited comments on the draft residue EIS. Comments and questions concerned safeguards termination limits, vitrification, and the spent fuel standard. The Site Reps answered questions regarding Recommendation 94-3 and B707 seismic concerns.

cc: Board Members