

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

April 5, 2002

TO: J. K. Fortenberry, Technical Director

FROM: D. F. Owen, RFETS Site Representative

SUBJECT: RFETS Activity Report for the Week Ending April 5, 2002

Plutonium Stabilization and Packaging System (PuSPS). RFETS has completed approximately 540 DOE-STD-3013 containers (not counting those in a reject/rework status). Since mid-March, PuSPS operations have been hampered by an increase in inner can weld failures (at least 10% failure rate during this period). Trouble-shooting of the inner can welding equipment and evaluation of the inner can weld problems continues. (3-A)

Conduct of Operations/Work Control. As reported on March 22nd, there had been at least 4 events during the prior month in the Building 707/Building 776 Project where operations personnel had not followed procedures properly and/or had not appropriately stopped the operation and obtained resolution of a work control issue/question. Following site rep. and DOE-RFFO inquiry on these events, Kaiser-Hill management has taken action to increase engineering, line management and independent safety oversight monitoring of conduct of operations in the Buildings 776/707 Project. The stated intentions of this monitoring group are to observe work, constructively engage work crews on conduct of operations/work control issues and to make recommendations for improvement to Project management. This increased conduct of operations monitoring is expected to last several weeks and until Project and independent safety oversight management determine such increased monitoring is no longer needed. (1-C)

Building 440 Transuranic Waste Visual Examination/Repacking Preparations. Kaiser-Hill is preparing to start transuranic (TRU) waste visual inspection and container repacking activities in Building 440. Currently, Building 440 is used for TRU waste storage and TRU waste shipping container loading activities. These new activities will be performed in a large steel enclosure (a permacon) housing a contamination cell (C-Cell) and a glovebox line for visual examination and repacking operations, respectively. The permacon has ventilation and fire protection safety systems. The C-Cell is currently used for waste drum headspace gas sampling activities and the glovebox line is being put into initial use. These capabilities are being added to Building 440 to reduce reliance on the major RFETS nuclear facilities that are in various stages of decommissioning. A Kaiser-Hill Readiness Assessment (RA) is planned to confirm readiness for these operations in early May. This week, DOE-RFFO approved the RA Plan-of-Action outlining the scope of the RA and the line management prerequisites for declaring readiness. (3-A)

cc: Board Members