

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

October 20, 2000

TO: K. Fortenberry, Technical Director

FROM: D. Grover, M. Sautman and S. Stokes, Hanford Site Representatives

SUBJ: Activity Report for the Week Ending October 20, 2000

Spent Nuclear Fuel Project (SNFP): Phase III testing was initiated this week. SNFP personnel cleaned, sorted, inspected, and placed into an Multi-Canister Overpack (MCO) basket their first canister of spent fuel on 10/20/00. This evolution was conducted extremely well, involving successful operation of the fuel retrieval and integrated water treatment systems. Testing is continuing unabated with the cleaning, sorting, and inspection of the second and third canisters. Phase III testing will likely continue until 6 MCO baskets have been filled.

The contractor Operational Readiness Review (ORR) team terminated the Cold Vacuum Drying Facility (CVDF) ORR on 10/20/00 after concluding that the facility was not ready for operation. This is another example where the adequacy of Fluor Hanford's management self assessment process is questionable. The contractor ORR team noted the following:

- Equipment problems repeatedly resulted in delays leading to a 2 day suspension in the ORR.
- Observed procedures were not adequate and most required changes to be performed.
- Operations personnel did not demonstrate adequate knowledge of facility processes and systems. Violations of conduct of operations as well as radiological control and occupational safety practices were noted. In addition, weaknesses in general and system specific knowledge were observed.
- Emergency preparedness and radiological control programs did not satisfactorily demonstrate their ability to protect the worker and the environment. (III-A)

Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP): In response to staff concerns, PFP performed laboratory testing on polycubes in order to determine the process parameters necessary to keep the flammable gas concentration below 25% of the lower flammability limit. The study concluded that 2 polycubes, rather than the 3 or 4 previously planned, could be safely oxidized per batch. (III-A)

Meeting with Bechtel Management: Messrs. Sautman and Grover met with Mike Hughes, Bechtel Hanford President, and Tom Logan, Vice President, to discuss decommissioning activities. (III-B)

cc: Board Members