

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

October 19, 2001

TO: J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: Paul F. Gubanc, Oak Ridge Site Representative
SUBJ: Activity Report for Week Ending October 19, 2001

A. DOE Oak Ridge Operations - Environmental Management (DOE-ORO/EM): On Monday, October 15, the Board issued a letter to DOE with a 45-day reporting requirement concerning the implementation of authorization basis (AB) and integrated safety management (ISM) by both DOE/ORO-EM and its prime contractor, Bechtel Jacobs Company (BJC). I have had several discussions with DOE Headquarters, ORO and BJC regarding their plans to respond:

1. DOE-ORO senior management has reacted very professionally and positively, acknowledging that the Board's issues are valid and the criticisms deserved.
2. The DOE-ORO Deputy Manager for Operations and the BJC Vice President & General Manager have assumed the leadership roles for their organizations' responses.
3. On October 18, the DOE Assistant Secretary for EM retracted "all delegations of EM-1 authority for approval of authorization basis documents" from DOE-ORO.
4. The shared responsibility in DOE-Headquarters between DOE-EM and the DOE-Office of Science (DOE-SC, which is the Lead Program Secretarial Officer for DOE-ORO) led to some early confusion as to what roles each will play in dealing with the issues. As of Friday, it appears DOE-EM will take the lead on the AB issues while DOE-SC will lead the reexamination of ISM implementation at DOE-ORO.
5. As suggested in the Board's letter of September 6, 2001, DOE-ORO has commissioned an independent review team to examine DOE-ORO's process for safety basis reviews in late November. While this team's efforts will not address the reporting requirement directly, it should reveal some of the root causes behind DOE-ORO and BJC's current AB condition.

B. ORNL Building 3019: This week, Building 3019 completed inspection of its first can as part of the Phase-1 U-233 inspection program. Non-destructive examination (gamma imaging) surprisingly revealed that the U-233 metal discs in this can were contained in only one food pack can (i.e., no inner container). The can was placed into a positive lift convenience can and was returned to an empty 4.5 inch tube vault. As for the greater than expected amounts of hydrogen found in the first tube vault, ORNL elected to issue an occurrence report and will evaluate whether an unreviewed safety question exists.

On a related note, of the \$13 million budgeted for FY02, DOE is holding back \$3 million for issuing a separate contract for the medical use program. This could potentially interfere with plans to install local HEPA filters into the 3019 vessel off-gas (VOG) system. I reminded DOE and ORNL that the Board's letter of September 6th, which acknowledged dependence on the Stack 3039 HEPA filters, assumed installation of the local HEPA filters would occur. ORNL hopes to revise the inspection plan to allow for adding the local HEPA filters. (3-A)

cc: Board Members