DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

June 16, 2000

TO: J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director

FROM: Paul F. Gubanc and David T. Moyle, Oak Ridge Site Representatives

SUBJ: Activity Report for Week Ending June 16, 2000

Mr. Moyle was on sick leave Wednesday through Friday.

A. Enriched Uranium Operations (EUO) Restart:

1. Based on discussions with EUO management this week, we are concerned that they don't fully appreciate the outstanding technical issues with reduction. We also are disappointed that EUO has not yet placed the reduction vessel integrity path forward (i.e., a test program) under the formal control of the EUO test organization which has shown greater reliability in capture, tracking and closure of issues than the engineering organizations have in the recent past.

2. On June 22, Mr. Beck, DP-20, will receive from Y-12 a presentation on the current status and new path forward proposal for EUO restart. This new path is expected to depend heavily on employing new equipment and technology. While tantalizing, success will depend upon an acknowledged and persistent DOE and LMES weakness: technical project management. (2-A)

B. ORNL Building 3019:

1. On June 12, DOE issued a request for expressions of interest (EOI) in the Commerce Business Daily regarding "the stabilization and disposition of the Oak Ridge U-233 inventory and deactivation of the storage facility." The EOI leaves open whether this work would be performed as either a DOE subcontractor or under a commercial license. Responses are due July 6.

2. On Friday, Congressman Joseph Knollenberg visited the Oak Ridge sites. On January 31, the congressman had issued a letter to the Secretary expressing concern with DOE's supply of U-233 daughter products for cancer therapy research. ORNL is currently mobilizing to extract such material from a small portion of the Building 3019 inventory. (The containers involved have been handled in the last few years and are not considered to have suspect integrity.) (3-A)

C. Y-12 Facility Infrastructure: On June 14, Mr. Gubanc attended a DOE/LMES meeting to discuss the maintenance of Y-12 water systems (e.g., chilled, brine, process) serving the nuclear facilities.

1. For those systems most likely to contain health-threatening biological growths (e.g., legionella in cooling towers), chemistry is closely monitored and controlled.

2. Chill water system chemistry is acknowledged to have gone unmaintained for over *seven* years and is known from recent maintenance evolutions to contain significant quantities of solids. Utilities management continues to cite a lack of funding and an inadequate risk-benefit

argument to correct this situation. (Utilities does not consider itself responsible for any impacts this condition may have on the safe and reliable operation of the nuclear facilities.)

3. LMES Industrial Hygiene (IH) is not proactive in looking for biological health effects in air handling and water utility systems but instead depends upon the workers to identify when their attentions are needed. The IH Manager promised to reinvigorate their involvement.

4. LMES contends that the undermaintained water and air handling systems do not support functions critical to health and safety. DOE is still verifying this contention.

The DOE technical staff continues to energetically explore and educate mid-level DOE/LMES managers on these issues. We are engaging the DOE and LMES senior management. (1-C)

cc: Board Members