

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

January 15, 1999

TO: G. W. Cunningham, Technical Director

FROM: R. Arcaro, & D. G. Ogg, Hanford Site Representatives

SUBJ: Activity Report for the Week Ending January 15, 1999

Outside expert, Dave Boyd was on site all week observing restart preparations at PFP.

A. Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP): On January 14, DOE-RL authorized the restart of plutonium thermal stabilization at PFP. Messrs. Arcaro and Boyd reviewed closure packages for the operational readiness review prestart findings, and found adequate evidence of closure and readiness for operations. At approximately 4:00 am, January 15, B&W Hanford Co. operators moved the first can of Pu-oxide from the storage vaults into PFP for stabilization, and loaded the first charge of material into the furnace on day shift.

This week, John McKibben, formerly of Westinghouse Savannah River Co., and Safe Sites of Colorado reported to B&W Hanford Co. for a five month assignment as a special advisor at PFP. The site representative met with Mr. McKibben to discuss the priorities and problem areas with the implementation of Recommendation 94-1 and at PFP.

B. Spent Nuclear Fuel Project (SNFP): This week, senior executives from DOE-HQ, Fluor Daniel Inc. and Duke Engineering & Services Inc. began discussions concerning the renewal of the contract for Duke Engineering & Services Hanford (DESH) as a major subcontractor on site. According to DOE-RL, there is not yet agreement on this issue and further discussions are to be held at a later date. Additionally, DOE-RL expects that the project will be relatively unaffected if the Duke corporate presence ends at Hanford – as long as key Duke program managers and engineers remain with the project.

C. Quality Improvement Plan: On January 14, Mr. Ogg met with Bob Shoup, the FDH Vice President of ESH&Q, and representatives from DOE-RL to discuss the FDH Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). FDH prepared the QIP in response to DOE-RL concerns over continuing deficiencies in site-wide quality programs and to address quality assurance problems under review by the DOE Office of Enforcement and Investigation (EH-10).

Although FDH has been working on the QIP since July 1998, progress has been slow (FDH plans to issue a detailed corrective action plan with milestones and due dates today, January 15). One of the three “fundamental quality weaknesses” is that feedback and improvement processes are not adequately defined nor well implemented. FDH has been attempting to upgrade the corrective action management and tracking system, but the current schedule shows that this may not be complete until September 1999. Mr. Ogg questioned the lack of urgency on this effort and reiterated that full integration of this effort with integrated safety management is very important to its success.

cc: Board members