

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

February 5, 1999

**TO:** G. W. Cunningham, Technical Director

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

**SUBJ:** Activity Report for the Week Ending February 5, 1999

A. Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP): Phase 1 of the Thermal Stabilization restart was completed ahead of schedule on February 2<sup>nd</sup> when the fifth charge of plutonium oxide was stabilized in a muffle furnace at PFP. Phase 2 of the restart (concurrent operation of the two muffle furnaces) was delayed due to mechanical problems with the HC-2 conveyor drive motor. Work on the conveyor is expected to last through the weekend.

B. Spent Nuclear Fuel Project (SNFP): On February 4, senior executives from Duke and DOE met in Washington, D.C. to discuss the Duke Engineering and Services Hanford Co. (DESH) contract at Hanford. DOE indicated that no final decision has been made, and that the project will continue under the current arrangement until then.

Meanwhile, construction workers at KW Basin continue to make progress in Fuel Retrieval System equipment installation, preparation for Integrated Water Treatment System equipment installation, and excavation to the common drain line from the basin. The latter activity will include exploratory drilling into the drain line to determine its condition - then ultimately grouting and permanently sealing the drain line.

C. Tank Farms Cross-site Transfer Line. The contractor is scheduled to operate the new Cross-site Transfer Line (CSTL) this Spring. An ORR was conducted for the CSTL last summer, but the line has not yet been operated. Because it has been several months since readiness was verified, it would be prudent to reverify that the people and systems are ready to operate. To date, the DOE and contractor plans for such a reverification of readiness are not clear. Following discussion with the Board's staff and site rep, DOE and contractor representatives indicated they would review the DOE Order on facility start-up to determine an approach to the reverification of readiness.

D. Tour of Building 324. Mr. Arcaro toured Building 324, the Waste Technology Engineering Laboratory, to observe the progress achieved by Babcock and Wilcox Hanford Company (BWHC) in deactivating the facility. Although several small laboratories have been cleaned out to the point of bare walls and capped off service lines, significant radioactive work remains. Clean-out of the radiochemical engineering cells including B-Cell, which is contaminated by as much as 3 million curies of fission products, is the most challenging task facing BWHC. Large skids of old processing equipment, called "racks," remain in B-Cell. To remove the racks, they are suspended by a crane and cut into smaller parts with plasma cutters. The work is slowed by difficulties with the aging cranes and remote manipulators in the facility.

cc: Board members