

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

May 7, 1999

TO: G. W. Cunningham, Technical Director

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

SUBJ: Activity Report for the Week Ending May 7, 1999

Mr. Arcaro was at DNFSB headquarters this week for Board briefings. Staff member D. Grover was on site observing the Cold Vacuum Drying facility final design review.

A. Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP): Babcock & Wilcox Hanford Company management continues to prepare for a feed material shift in thermal stabilization operations. The new feed material consists of approximately 50 containers of plutonium-bearing sludge. Several prerequisites must be satisfied before the feed shift (tentatively scheduled for June 17) and include completion of:

- a hazards analysis
- a feed shift checklist
- operator training and emergency drills
- a DOE ORR team reinspection of the DOE line management oversight program

B. Spent Nuclear Fuel Project (SNFP): This week Mr. Ogg met with representatives of the General Accounting Office (GAO). The GAO is conducting a follow-up review of the SNFP at the request of the House Commerce Committee. Mr. Ogg answered questions about Board oversight of the project and observations of DOE and contractor performance in the areas of project management, control of vendors and subcontractors, safety analysis report preparation and approval, and adherence to the schedule.

C. 233-S Readiness Assessment: On May 3, the DOE Readiness Assessment team held their closeout meeting, and reported six pre-start findings and five observations. One pre-start finding reflects an earlier question raised by Mr. Ogg concerning an estimate of the radioactive source term in the facility. A preliminary response from Bechtel Hanford, Inc. (BHI) indicates no change in the estimate, but points out plans to perform additional characterization prior to intrusive work into the highly contaminated areas. Mr. Ogg and the Board's staff will continue to review the formality of BHI policies and procedures that implement Integrated Safety Management System (ISMS) concepts, particularly in the area of safety documentation.

D. Meeting with New Manager: On May 5, Mr. Ogg met with Mr. Keith Kline, the new Manager of the DOE Richland Operations Office. Discussions focused on the priorities of ensuring timely and substantial progress at the Spent Nuclear Fuel Project, the Plutonium Finishing Plant, and at Tank Farms. Mr. Ogg also emphasized the importance of all contractors exercising rigor in conducting work within the framework of ISMS.

cc: Board members