

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

May 26, 2000

TO: J. K. Fortenberry, Technical Director

FROM: D. F. Owen, D. J. Grover, RFETS Site Representatives

SUBJECT: RFETS Activity Report for the Week Ending May 26, 2000

Plutonium Oxide Disposition. RFETS is evaluating whether a portion of the plutonium oxides containing less than 20 weight percent plutonium can be shipped to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP). Material greater than 10 percent plutonium would be blended down to meet a safeguards termination limit variance which will need to be approved by DOE-HQ. These oxides were primarily generated during the deactivation and decommissioning activities conducted to date. The remaining oxides will be blended to greater than 30 percent plutonium and packaged in 3013 containers. This effort would reduce the planned number of 3013 oxide containers by approximately 80, out of 1,300, and clarify the disposition path for hold-up material remaining in equipment. The site reps will continue to follow this effort. (3-A)

Transuranic (TRU) Waste Management. For some time RFETS has been advocating that TRU waste containing classified shapes be directly disposed at WIPP. This would provide a substantial reduction in the amount of material processing (e.g. crushing, size reduction, and other declassification operations) in gloveboxes, thereby reducing worker exposure and other risks from glovebox processing. DOE-RFFO has requested that Kaiser-Hill develop worker exposure and cost savings as well as schedule estimates to assist with the justification of an effort to allow acceptance of classified waste at WIPP. The DOE Carlsbad Area Office (DOE-CAO) has indicated their support of the effort. DOE-CAO has proposed conducting an assessment starting in June 2000 (with the participation of certain DOE-Headquarters and field organizations) to identify the security needs for such an effort. (3-A)

Feedback and Improvement. In February 2000, DOE-Headquarters issued the Type A Investigation Report on the Sodium-Potassium Explosion at the Y-12 Plant. Since then, the site reps. have inquired about any planned RFETS' efforts to capture pertinent lessons learned from the accident and effect improvement where appropriate with DOE-RFFO and Kaiser-Hill management. DOE-RFFO and Kaiser-Hill management indicated that several factors involved in the accident, related to Integrated Safety Management functions and principles, were applicable to RFETS. DOE-RFFO has conducted some training on the issues identified in the report and Kaiser-Hill has made distribution of the report on the site E-mail. Though slow in development, Kaiser-Hill has also been preparing a training module on the accident to apply project-by-project. This effort is reported to be nearing completion. (1-C)

cc: Board Members