

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

February 27, 1998

TO: G.W. Cunningham, Technical Director

FROM: P.F. Gubanc & D.G. Ogg, Hanford Site Representatives

SUBJ: Activity Report for Week Ending February 27, 1998

Outside Expert Dave Boyd was on site to observe the DOE-RL Readiness Assessment of PFP.

A. Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP): The DOE-RL Readiness Assessment (RA) for PFP "Phase 1" fissile material handling was completed this week and verified readiness to resume handling operations pending closure of pre-start findings. As discussed last week, PFP will issue a "Startup Plan" for Phase 1 which will clearly identify what specific operations are authorized, how resumption of activities will ramp up and how these activities will be monitored for performance. The DOE-RL RA team will concur that their review adequately bounds the fissile material handling activities described in the plan.

DOE-RL's monthly 94-1 status report for Dec/Jan clearly states that the start of Pu solution stabilization will be delayed from June 1997 to August 1999, *due to insufficient funding*. Further, even the 1999 completion date is contingent upon sufficient FY99 funding which is already under assault. (Washington's Governor has threatened to sue DOE over missed and delayed tank farm and spent fuel program commitments.) **Board action will be necessary if plutonium solution stabilization activities are desired at Hanford within the next several years.**

B. Spent Nuclear Fuel Project (SNFP): DESH reports that the overall SNF project is now 8 days behind schedule, a 4 day slip from last week. The project will continue to incur a day-for-day slip until Duke Engineering & Services Hanford (DESH) management resolves differences between the design information and the safety analysis assumptions for the Cold Vacuum Drying facility process systems. DESH expects to have a "plan" to address this problem by Friday, March 6. The project continues to experience other delays (loss of "float"), growing cost overruns, and potential vendor claims against the project. We believe that the probability the project will meet the currently projected July 1999 date for start of fuel movement is becoming increasingly slim.

C. Passdown of Safety Requirements: At a February 26 meeting initiated by this office, Fluor Daniel Hanford (FDH) and its subcontractors acknowledged the following:

1. This fiscal year, FDH is embarking on a major program to revise the site-level procedures.
2. The FDH procedure change process does not rigorously address implementation (i.e., can the changes be implemented in a timely manner and within existing project budgets).
3. The FDH procedure technical authorities are not required to seek line management or subcontractor input, and therefore, cannot adequately assess project impact.

Changes to site-level procedures can have profound impacts on site project schedules and budgets. We are attempting to educate and motivate DOE-RL to take action with FDH on this matter.

cc: Board members