

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

May 8, 1998

TO: G.W. Cunningham, Technical Director

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

SUBJ: Activity Report for Week Ending May 8, 1998

Mr. Ogg was on leave Thursday and Friday.

A. Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP): On May 5, Mr. Gubanc met with DOE-RL and PFP staff to discuss the reprioritization of plutonium stabilization activities (i.e., treating metals before solutions).

1. Up until late 1996, PFP maintained a formally documented approach to plutonium hazard identification and prioritization and worked to stabilize the highest risk materials.
2. Throughout 1997 and early 1998, DOE and contractor management attentions were focused on the PFP fissile material hold, tank A-109 explosion, and other matters. Efforts to update the stabilization program's technical understanding and priorities were sidelined.
3. While there may be some justification to adjust 1996-vintage priorities, DOE-RL and its contractors have done so without the benefit of a rigorous technical evaluation. The new priorities are also dominated by budgetary influences as opposed to risk reduction.

A more detailed staff report will be submitted next week for the Board's consideration.

B. Spent Nuclear Fuel Project (SNFP): On May 1, Ron Peterson, of Fluor Daniel, Inc. issued a letter to Duke Engineering & Services closing the "cure notice" issued on December 10, 1997. It is unclear on what basis Fluor made the decision to close the cure notice, and on May 5, the Manager of DOE-RL issued a letter to Fluor requesting clarification.

C. Integrated Safety Management System (ISMS): This week, DOE-RL provided us its final report on DOE's Phase-1 ISMS verification of K-Basins (conducted in January). While many useful lessons and improvements are identified, two key observations (not in the report) bear mentioning:

1. DOE-RL's ISMS expert has been instrumental in mentoring the contractors; a required task for the foreseeable future. Because of his talents, he has also recently been assigned to assist in DOE-RL's review of SNFP safety analyses. (This is why the report is so late.)
2. The report recommends specific actions for the contractors but is more passive with respect to DOE-RL corrective actions. DOE-RL's history of self-improvement is not strong.

Additional DOE-RL action is required in both areas if ISMS is to succeed at Hanford.

D. 233-S Decontamination and Decommissioning (D&D) Operational Readiness Review (ORR): The 233-S Plutonium Concentration Facility is an old, inactive facility being prepared for D&D by Bechtel Hanford, Inc. (BHI). On May 8, during the kickoff briefing for the DOE ORR, DOE-RL acknowledged that only two of nine ORR team members were qualified to enter the facility's surface and airborne contamination areas. At Mr. Gubanc's urging, additional team members are attempting to get qualified and the Team Leader is reconsidering the access requirements for his team members.

cc: Board members