

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

October 16, 1998

TO: G. W. Cunningham, Technical Director

FROM: D. G. Ogg, Hanford Site Representative

SUBJ: Activity Report for Week Ending October 16, 1998

Mr. Ogg was on sick leave Tuesday and Wednesday. Staff member R. Arcaro was on site Wednesday assisting with Site Representative duties.

A. Spent Nuclear Fuel Project (SNFP): On October 9, SNFP management issued the new "TPA Schedule" to DOE-RL for approval. This is the schedule that reflects milestone dates recently negotiated by DOE-RL and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region X. DOE-RL plans to review the schedule and associated Baseline Change Request and give their approval as soon as possible.

B. Secretary of Energy Visit: On October 13-14, Bill Richardson made his first trip to Hanford as the new Secretary of Energy. He met with senior Hanford and community leaders and toured the Hanford site. On October 14, Mr. Arcaro attended a community breakfast associated with the Secretary's visit.

Of note during the Secretary's trip was an agreement reached by DOE and the State of Washington to avoid the threatened lawsuit against DOE concerning interim stabilization of high level waste tanks. Under the terms of the agreement, DOE will commit to re-prioritize the pumping activities to address those tanks perceived to pose the greatest threat of leakage to the vadose zone and the groundwater. DOE also agreed to request full funding for interim stabilization when the proposed budget goes to Congress. After further negotiations, new milestones associated with this activity will be codified in a consent decree and filed in federal court.

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C. Site Wide Contamination: Fluor Daniel Hanford and its subcontractors have been aggressively pursuing mitigative actions to address the spread of contamination on site. To date, FDH has identified more than 20 spots of contamination outside of controlled areas. FDH attributes this problem to an unusually thick population of fruit flies and gnats that have apparently ingested radioactive contamination along with a sugar water solution used as a fixative, then spread this contamination to other areas, particularly kitchen areas and trash bins. The radionuclide identified most is pure strontium-90 implicating the B-Plant/WESF complex as the source. 55 personnel believed to have had contact with the suspected areas have been bioassayed and no significant uptakes have been identified to date. The highest dose rate detected to date is 15 mrad/hr on contact with a rotting piece of fruit.

cc: Board members