

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

October 2, 1998

TO: G. W. Cunningham, Technical Director

FROM: M. T. Sautman

SUBJECT: RFETS Activity Report for Week Ending October 2, 1998

High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) Filter Degradation. Because previous testing of the filter plenum deluge systems may have degraded the HEPA filters, RFFO directed K-H to change the first stage of HEPA filters in both B371 and B707. In addition, K-H Fire Protection Engineering has concluded that there should be no future testing of manual spray systems installed in the filter plenum systems. This position is based on ALARA concerns associated with alternative testing methods or accidental wetting of the filter even if plastic sheets were placed over the filters during spray tests. RFFO had previously extended the periodicity for testing the automatic deluge systems to 3 years. RFFO wants K-H to conduct tests of the demisters used at RFETS to quantify how much water, if any, is passing through the demisters and onto the filters during tests of the automatic systems.

Solutions. Tapping and draining was completed for the second area in B371 and the nitric acid/ferrous sulfamate system in B771. All the process piping associated with the latter system and the oxalic acid system in B771 were removed also. The last two weekly reports discussed efforts by the Site Rep to make sure the workers were protected in case higher than expected contamination levels were found. During pipe removal of the oxalic acid system, liquid was found inside the pipe that exceeded the RWP contamination suspension limits. Luckily, the workers were wearing respirators and stopped work. Work was resumed with additional personal protective equipment.

Richardson Visit. The Site Rep attended a meeting that Secretary Richardson held with elected state and local officials, business leaders, and regulators. Most of the meeting consisted of attendees providing opinions on WIPP's opening, future uses for RFETS, disposing waste at a private CO facility, and other local issues. The Secretary mentioned that next week he would be nominating a NASA manager to be EM-1. He also stated that there had been some progress between LANL and the state of New Mexico about sampling requirements for non-RCRA TRU waste. The Secretary had additional meetings with union representatives, stakeholders, and senior managers. He was given a car tour of RFETS, with stops outside buildings 371 and 881.

Plutonium Stabilization and Packaging System (PuSPS). DOE took ownership of the BNFL PuSPS this week, although the stabilization portion was accepted as is. DOE transferred the PuSPS to K-H for post acceptance testing.

Plutonium Residues. The conference committee report for the energy and water development appropriations bill does not allow any funds to be used to dispose of TRU waste in WIPP which contains concentrations of plutonium in excess of 20 percent by weight for the aggregate of any material category as described in the residue EIS. The only residue category that meets this criterion is scrub alloy, which is to be shipped to SRS for processing.

FY99 Performance Measures (PM). Approximately 50% of the available fees for FY99 are related to Recommendation 94-1 work. Most of the rest is related to decommissioning or shipping activities. The PM's related to B371 solutions and combustible residues are less aggressive than the Recommendation 94-1 milestones that RFFO proposed. This information has been provided to RFFO.

cc: Board members