

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

TO: G. W. Cunningham, Technical Director
FROM: R.F. Warther, M.T. Sautman
SUBJECT: RFETS Activity Report for Week Ending July 3, 1997

Hunt and Boyd (OE) reviewed salt stabilization radiological control issues. Warther was on leave.

Residues. The Site Reps were informed that there were still two drums containing ion exchange resins that had not been neutralized. Since this material is potentially thermally instable, the Site Reps are pushing on the buildings to resolve the criticality infractions that have prevented movement of these drums for months. Cementation of the neutralized resins has also fallen behind schedule.

RFETS may vitrify sand, slag, and crucible (SS&C) in B707 if feed requirements cannot be worked out with SRS. SRS is reportedly requesting that all the magnesium oxide sand be separated from the slag and crucible to facilitate canyon processing. This separation would be difficult, especially for the pulverized SS&C. There will be a conference call next week between the sites on this issue.

At RFFO's direction, the contractor is developing a strategy for pursuing additional safeguards termination limits for the remaining salts and much of the "ash" residues. Preliminary plans are to request an exemption for all residues containing less than 10 percent plutonium.

Recently, 16 drums of Ful-Flo filters were found to have corrosion products on and around the plastic housing drum filters and drum lids. These filters were replaced with stainless steel housing filters. However, the Site Reps identified to the responsible parties that the reason plastic housing filters were installed on some drums was that the previous steel ones were clogging every couple of months. Testing of these plastic filters would help determine if there was any clogging. The plastic filters were already having problems with mechanical failure due to being screwed in too tight.

Readiness Reviews. Last week's report discussed some problems associated with a recent management review. This week, the management review for the crimp and seal project was terminated after three hours. This activity involves crimping and sealing of the stainless steel tubulation of former Stockpile Reliability Evaluation Program pits and other certain pits to make them suitable for long term storage. The reviewers found that some signatures on operators' qualifications cards were by people who may not have been authorized to do so. During the pre- evolution brief, the job foreman was from another building and was uncertain about the proper response and egress to alarms.

Qualification Boards. Qualification Boards for a Shift Technical Advisor and Shift Manager were observed. The STA passed a relatively easy Board although his responses were shallow and slow. The SM failed a rigorous Board, which had many probing, follow-up questions. None of the Board members showed any hesitation in failing him although the building is short Shift Managers.

cc: Board Members