

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

December 6, 1996

TO: G. W. Cunningham, Technical Director

FROM: J. Kent Fortenberry / Joe Sanders

SUBJECT: SRS Activity Report for Week Ending December 6, 1996

The site reps attended two public meetings this week: an EIS scoping meeting for construction and operation of the proposed Accelerator to Produce Tritium (APT) and the Tritium Extraction Facility (TEF), and a discussion of the 10-Year Plan for environmental management at SRS.

Tritium Extraction Furnace Operation - The site reps observed charging of the extraction furnace in Building 232-H. Recall that this was the same operation that was stopped in October (October 18 weekly report) when we pointed out that several procedure steps had been skipped. Since that time, the procedure has been rewritten. During this operation, the site reps discovered and informed the operating personnel that a valve had been inadvertently closed. The occurrence and resolution was annotated on the procedure, in adherence with WSRC site procedures, and the activity continued albeit with additional procedural problems requiring annotation by shift operations and technical management. After the furnace was loaded, the procedure had to be suspended due to equipment problems. This is the second time that operational problems have been experienced during this activity. In order to determine whether an endemic problem exists at the tritium facilities, the site reps observed reservoir unloading operations at Building 233-H (formerly RTF). This operation was performed quite effectively and the operator was clearly knowledgeable of the process and systems.

OMB Recommendations - OMB made several recommendations to produce savings that would allow DOE to achieve EM cleanup objectives under the current funding profile. General recommendations included privatizing 30 to 50 percent of all site work and services over the next three years. OMB called for clear policies and assumptions for cleanup (e.g., deactivate versus decontaminate/decommission, on-site versus off-site waste disposal, etc.). OMB pointed out that sites needed to have a strategy for downsizing of the permanent workforce with the example that SRS is currently 150% of the size it was in 1988, when SRS was still a production site. Also specific to SRS was a recommendation to halt the accelerated start-up of H-Canyon and report to Congress in March a decision to operate only one canyon.

Loading Mark-31's at L-Basin - The site reps observed operations at the L-Reactor Disassembly Basin including the introduction of an empty shipping cask into the basin and the loading of Mark-31 buckets into the cask insert. The heavy-load crane operations and the spent fuel movements were well supervised. Procedures were used effectively. Movement of the Mark-31's left a thick cloud of corrosion products indicating continued corrosion since they were last moved a couple of years ago.

cc: Board Members.