

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

December 19, 1997

TO: G. W. Cunningham, Technical Director
FROM: R. F. Warther, M. T. Sautman

SUBJ: RFETS Activity Report for Week Ending December 19, 1997

Solutions. All actinide solution tanks in B771 are now operationally empty. The last high level plutonium solution tank was drained this week. The scheduled milestone for this was December 31, 1997.

The Site Reps, Kasdorf, Hunt, and Von Holle participated in a videoconference on the B771 tap and drain project. Overall, the various methods used to remove holdup solution appear safe. At this point, it is not clear how the system work packages take advantage of the engineer's walkdowns, and they do not identify the preferred draining and collection methods. Nor is it clear whether the identified drain points will be adequate to drain horizontal piping, especially if gravity drained. There are also questions about when solution removal is complete and how the system will be dried afterwards. The Site Reps will meet with the project engineers for B771 and B779 and K-H to resolve these outstanding issues.

Residues. RFFO has told K-H to develop new milestones for Recommendation 94-1 by February. The milestones are to assume that safeguards termination limits variances are granted for ash and salt residues. Milestones are to include repacking these residues in pipe overpack containers without stabilization, shipping residues to WIPP and SRS, and developing safety analyses to support these actions. Other milestones are to address shipments of metal and oxide.

Shift Manager Qualification. The Site Reps observed two shift manager requalification oral boards this week. These are the first two boards observed under the new SSOC qualification procedure requiring the presence of a Vice President. Although the first candidate (B776) failed, the Site Reps believe he would have passed under some previous facility qualification programs. The Site Reps have noted that B776 management conducts some of the toughest boards at RFETS and has previously expected a high level of performance. The second candidate (B707) passed. The qualification boards were well-run. The Site Reps believe that the Shift Manager requalifying in this facility is one of the best shift managers on the site.

QA/QC. As part of K-H's actions to correct QA/QC issues at the site, B707 personnel will inspect all systems and components directly related to salt stabilization prior to startup. The corrective action plan provided for this prestart finding does not state this specifically. However, the Site Reps met with the B707 Project Manager and RFFO personnel to discuss the corrective action plan weaknesses. The Project Manager acknowledged this shortcoming and provided a letter of instruction from the facility engineer to facility QA specifying that the systems would be inspected. He stated that the corrective action plan will be corrected, and the closure package will reflect specific actions completed to address this finding.

B779 Decommissioning. RFFO, K-H, SSOC and RMRS met to discuss progress on B779 decommissioning planning. SSOC intends to follow a phased approach to building decommissioning by starting with gloveboxes and equipment that is not contaminated or very slightly contaminated and working up to gloveboxes that are heavily contaminated. Three issues were identified. First, K-H has not identified a disposition path for waste material removed from B779. There was agreement that this material would not be stored outside, but a specific facility has not been identified. Second, the controls and procedures to

disconnect gloveboxes from the ventilation system without upsetting the facility's ΔP has not been identified. Third, RFFO has not identified the specific type and scope of readiness review to be conducted. K-H and SSOC proposed a K-H management review for the first phase of non-contaminated or minimally contaminated gloveboxes removal. However, K-H and SSOC admitted that the priority sequencing was not a schedule, and RFFO verbally indicated that they were considering a more conservative approach (i.e., more rigorous readiness determination broader in scope).

cc: Board Members