

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

February 23, 2001

TO: K. Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: D. Grover and M. Sautman, Hanford Site Representatives
SUBJ: Activity Report for the Week Ending February 23, 2001

Spent Nuclear Fuel Project (SNFP): The third multi-canister overpack (MCO) completed processing and was placed in the Canister Storage Building. Conduct of operations continue to improve with no major issues identified. The project is evaluating whether to request the removal of the mandatory contractor senior supervisory watch and continuous DOE facility representative coverage.

The SNFP issued the comprehensive plan and baseline change request (BCR) for SNFP process improvements and the alternate fuel transfer strategy this week. The site representatives met with the Fluor Hanford chief operating officer and the DOE Richland (RL) Deputy Manager to discuss them. The contractor states that the BCR is needed to improve the probability for successful completion of the project and can be accomplished within the current funding and schedule restrictions. DOE-RL has initiated both internal and independent reviews of the BCR with a initial check to determine the completeness of the BCR within a week. The BCR shows a four month and two month improvement in the date for initiating and completing fuel removal from the K-East basin respectively. However, the comprehensive plan provided neither discusses the technical and programmatic risks involved with the proposed strategy nor the way in which these risks will be managed to protect these modest schedule gains. (III-A)

Recommendation 2000-2: Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP) personnel completed their Phase I assessment by having a round table discussion between their cognizant engineers and senior line managers. Mr. Sautman observed this effort and offered some suggestions for making the discussion of the data more informative. If the written reports reflect the verbal discussions, PFP's reports should provide a good description of the physical and infrastructure issues associated with their vital safety systems with only a modest expenditure of resources. Mr. Sautman also met with tank farms personnel to discuss their considerably larger review. (I-C)

Building 325: The Radiochemical Processing Laboratory's authorization basis focuses on activities and hazards within the building's walls. An unusual event was declared when it was discovered that hazard category III quantities of nuclear material were located in an outside radioactive materials storage area without a supporting safety analysis. Among the issues that led to this are the gray areas between staging and storage of material and coverage gaps between building and shipping container safety analysis reports. There are likely other cases at Hanford where the handling and storage of radioactive material outside the facility have not been fully analyzed. Because of this and the potentially larger consequences due to unfiltered releases, the Site Reps will be looking for other examples.

cc: Board Members