

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

December 7, 2001

TO: K. Fortenberry, Technical Director

FROM: D. Grover and M. Sautman, Hanford Site Representatives

SUBJ: Activity Report for the Week Ending December 7, 2001

Readiness Reviews: The Site Reps met with the Department of Energy (DOE) Deputy Manager and the Assistant Manager for Central Plateau to discuss concerns with Fluor Hanford (FH) performance during readiness reviews and preparation by DOE teams. Despite multiple conversations with FH senior managers over the past year, FH has been unable or unwilling to make any real progress in this area. Based on FH's track record of repeated premature declarations of readiness, questionable thoroughness of contractor reviews, and often inadequate closure of findings, the Site Reps have questioned DOE's basis for continuing to delegate to FH sole responsibility for evaluating readiness and authorizing startup for many activities. (I-C)

Tank Farms: The annulus ventilation system for AZ Farm was restarted this week, albeit 2+ months later than the original commitment to the Board. In addition, during a tank video inspection, significant corrosion was identified in the AY-102 annulus liner. The circumstances seem to be similar to that previously seen with AY-101. (III-A)

In response to Board and DOE concerns, the Office of River Protection (ORP) will complete a 2-phase re-verification of the CH2M Hill Hanford Group Integrated Safety Management System by May 31, 2002. (I-C)

Technical Qualifications: Mr. Sautman has been reviewing the Richland and ORP Technical Capability and Qualification programs. While earlier participants qualified in a broad range of functional areas, most of the current participants only need to meet the General Technical Base Qualification. The only participants required to complete functional area qualifications are 6 critical technical skill positions (mostly senior technical safety managers, facility representatives, and nuclear safety personnel). Systems engineers will not be required to complete any functional qualification on their systems although a few might have some relevant qualifications (e.g., fire protection engineers). Also excluded are several areas that will likely be very important to the waste treatment plant (e.g., chemical processing, construction management and engineering, project management, quality assurance). ORP has not filled any of their 7 systems engineer positions nor been able to effectively use any of the 50+ people who expressed interest. This will hinder their ability to lead Phase 2 Assessments. (I-B)

Spent Nuclear Fuel Project (SNFP): EM-43 conducted a review of the SNFP performance against the Alternate Fuel Transfer Strategy baseline change request. The major technical areas of concern identified are the continuing equipment problems in the K-West Basin which are hampering production. A secondary concern is the reliance on changes to the Safety Analysis Report to allow shortening of the drying cycle at the Cold Vacuum Drying Facility. These changes are necessary to prevent drying from becoming the limiting step once K-West solves their production problems. (III-A)

cc: Board Members