

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

April 17, 1998

TO: G.W. Cunningham, Technical Director

FROM: P.F. Gubanc & D.G. Ogg, Hanford Site Representatives

SUBJ: Activity Report for Week Ending April 17, 1998

A. Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP): DOE-RL authorization to resume PFP Phase 1 fissile material handling is expected April 20; seven weeks since the DOE Readiness Assessment was completed.

B. Spent Nuclear Fuel Project (SNFP): On April 15, Fluor Daniel Hanford (FDH) submitted to DOE-RL a new schedule and cost estimate for the SNFP. DOE-RL will use this information during Tri-Party Agreement negotiations with the Washington State Dept. Of Ecology and the EPA, Region X starting April 20. The proposed schedule indicates the potential for significant additional delays in the project.

C. Funding for Recommendation Milestones: In the past, we have reported that DOE-RL has been, or will be, unable to fund work related to Recommendation 94-1 milestones within the SNFP and at PFP. Delayed projects include Pu stabilization and packaging, Pu polycube pyrolysis, and the removal of SNF and sludge from the K Basins.

Lack of full funding for these projects is reflected in the FY 1999 budget request that DOE currently has before Congress. In addition, preliminary discussions for reprogramming of funds for FY 1999, and planning for the FY 2000 budget request reflect additional potential funding shortfalls for the SNFP and PFP, as well as potential shortfalls within TWRS (Recommendation 93-5). However, at no time in nearly two years, has DOE-HQ submitted formal changes to the Implementation Plans for affected Board Recommendations, or followed the reporting requirement of the Board's enabling legislation, 42 USC 2286d.(f)(2).

D. DOE-RL Technical Qualification Program (TQP) Status: In accordance with DOE O 360.1, *Training*, "Incumbent (DOE) employees shall complete the TQP within three years of the date of this order." (i.e., May 31, 1998). Of the 287 employees in the DOE-RL TQP, 171 are subject to the May 1998 completion date. As of April 10, only 16 employees are less than 90% complete; the majority in the office of the Assistant Manager for Environmental Restoration. We will discuss with DOE-RL management what remedies can be applied for those not completing qualification in time.

E. Hanford Radiological Instruments: This week we learned that many of the instruments on-site are "special ordered" due to a Hanford-unique specification that dates back to the 1940's. Specifically, the scale select switch is in reverse order from normal "off-the-shelf" instruments. This kind of parochial approach complicates maintenance, increases costs and stifles innovation and productivity in the use of radiological monitoring at Hanford. We will again suggest that DOE-RL apply energetic and technically talented assets to this topic.

cc: Board members