

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

June 12, 1998

TO: G. W. Cunningham, Technical Director

FROM: D. G. Ogg, Hanford Site Representative

SUBJ: Activity Report for Week Ending June 12, 1998

Staff members Bill Von Holle and Randy Robinson were on site for a Chemical Safety review. Al Jordan and outside expert Bob Lewis were on site to observe the ISMS Phase 1 Verification at Pacific Northwest National Laboratory. Ray Daniels was on site assisting with Site Representative duties.

A. Tank Waste Remediation System: On June 8, at a press conference in Richland, Governor Gary Locke announced plans to sue the Department of Energy, Richland Operations Office (DOE-RL) for failing to comply with milestones of the Tri-Party Agreement. The milestones relate to interim stabilization of single shell tanks to remove liquid wastes from the tanks and thereby reduce the chance of further waste leakage to the soil and groundwater. Copies of the Governor's statement and the DOE-RL response have been forwarded to D.C. Additionally, we have a recent copy of the interim stabilization program plan that will also be forwarded to the Board's staff.

B. Spent Nuclear Fuel Project (SNFP): Fluor Daniel Hanford (FDH) provided Level II and Level III schedules for the SNFP to DOE-RL this week. DOE-RL is reviewing the schedules and has committed to forward them to the Board. Next week, DOE-RL and the EPA will have further discussions about the SNFP, and representatives of the EPA plan to tour several of the SNFP facilities.

C. Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP): This week, Dr. Jerry McKamy and members of his criticality safety review team visited the site to present their final report, "The PFP Criticality Safety Program Review." During the period March 30 - April 3, 1998, the team reviewed the Babcock and Wilcox Hanford Co. (BWHC) nuclear criticality safety (NCS) program at PFP. The report includes many findings, and highlights the following three concerns:

- FDH has not promulgated clear NCS program requirements, provided sufficient numbers of qualified subject matter experts, or supplied sufficient funding to meet their commitments.
- DOE-RL has not provided clear performance expectations to FDH concerning NCS, nor provided sufficient oversight of the contractor's NCS program.
- Fluor Daniel Northwest does not demonstrate the capability to develop criticality safety evaluation reports that assure that operations will remain subcritical under all normal and credible abnormal events.

BWHC continues to develop and implement corrective actions in response to a criticality safety infraction that took place on June 2, where wastes potentially containing fissile materials were moved by several people who were not qualified fissile material handlers. An initial review of the event by DOE-RL indicates that the problems encountered are reflective of continuing lack of proper administrative controls. The Board's staff will continue to follow corrective action for this event.

cc: Board members