

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

August 7, 1998

TO: G. W. Cunningham, Technical Director

FROM: D. G. Ogg, Hanford Site Representative

SUBJ: Activity Report for Week Ending August 7, 1998

The full Board was on site for public meetings on Recommendation 92-4 and 93-5, and site meetings on the Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP) and the Spent Nuclear Fuel Project (SNFP). Staff members Krahn, MacEvoy, Thibadeau, Arcaro, Wille and Stokes accompanied the Board.

A. Spent Nuclear Fuel Project (SNFP): SNFP personnel completed testing in the KW basin to determine the thickness of the aluminum hydroxide coating on selected spent fuel elements stored in closed aluminum canisters. Preliminary results indicate that the thicknesses observed are less than those assumed in the analysis of potential pressurization of the storage container during interim storage. The testing setup in the basin will be retained until statistical analysis of the data is completed. Closure of this issue is expected by the end of August 1998.

DOE-RL provided advance comments this week on the Cold Vacuum Drying Facility safety analysis report (SAR) covering the systems design. SNFP management resubmitted the SAR in June 1998 after it was rejected by DOE-RL in February 1998. The total of 350 comments includes 38 comments that need to be resolved prior to approval of the SAR. Approval by DOE-RL and issuance of a safety evaluation report are scheduled for September 1998. The project is currently reviewing the comments to determine their impact on systems design and schedule.

B. PFP Management Reorganization: Babcock and Wilcox Hanford Company (BWHC) has undertaken a "re-engineering" effort to realign its PFP management structure from an operations orientation to a project orientation. BWHC expects that this reorganization will allow management to better focus on specific Pu stabilization and facility deactivation projects. This effort includes the issuance of a new Integrated Project Management Plan, a new work breakdown structure, and new project planning documents. Although BWHC refers to the use of a systems engineering approach, it is not clear that true systems engineering principles are being applied. I plan to meet with the DOE-RL program manager next week to discuss this activity.

C. Board Meeting With State and Federal Agencies: On August 4, the Board and staff met with representatives from the Washington State Department of Ecology, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) - Region X and the Oregon Office of Energy. The discussions were productive and focused on the SNFP and the Tank Waste Remediation System activities at Hanford. Mr. Doug Sherwood informed the Board that the EPA had invoked the Dispute Resolution process to address overdue Tri-Party Agreement milestones on the SNFP.

cc: Board members