

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

October 23, 1998

TO: G. W. Cunningham, Technical Director

FROM: D. G. Ogg, Hanford Site Representative

SUBJ: Activity Report for Week Ending October 23, 1998

Staff member R. Arcaro was on site all week assisting with Site Representative duties.

A. Spent Nuclear Fuel Project (SNFP): On October 22, the DOE Office of Enforcement and Investigations (EH-10) held an Enforcement Conference to review SNFP Quality Assurance (QA) deficiencies. The QA issues under review fit into three main categories: 1) SNFP qualification and oversight of subcontractors, 2) Safety Analysis Report, Technical Safety Requirement and procedural noncompliances, and 3) identifying, correcting and preventing recurrence of quality problems. After the conference, Mr. Ogg met with EH-10 representatives for a short debrief. EH-10 expects to issue an enforcement report outlining their findings within two weeks.

In response to a request for an Expression of Interest to fabricate multi-canister overpacks (MCOs), SNFP personnel received responses from 32 companies. Of these, 19 filled out a vendor questionnaire, and 12 of the 19 included cost estimates. Of these 12, 3 are current holders of an N-Stamp certification per ASME Section III, and the other 7 are currently obtaining or willing to obtain N-Stamp certification.

B. Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP): Mr. Arcaro met with DOE and PFP management to discuss resumption of plutonium stabilization. Although the plant schedule showed a declaration of readiness was to occur October 23, such a declaration was not made and is not expected until next week. Further discussions focused on plant funding necessary to accelerate plutonium stabilization activities. DOE has directed the contractor to fund the Plutonium Stabilization and Packaging System (PuSAP) at \$10M for FY99 and begin procurement of only the packaging component. This funding level is a \$20M cut in FY99 funding for the PuSAP. Of the \$20M cut, PFP will lose \$12.8M and fund additional stabilization activities at \$7.2M. This additional funding will allow the installation of 3 more muffle furnaces, initiation of cementation operations, and earlier installation of the production vertical calciner.

C. Tank 101-SY Level Growth: The level in tank 101-SY continues to rise as more gas is being retained in the waste. Although the waste remains mixed and a gas release is not expected, the level growth cannot be allowed to continue. Mitigative measures being considered are adding water to dissolve the waste crust to allow gradual gas release, or transferring the waste to another tank. The contractor is preparing to take three core samples from the tank to support these mitigative measures.

D. Meeting with Ecology: Messrs. Ogg and Arcaro met with four members of the Washington State Department of Ecology staff for introductions and informal discussions. Topics included functions and responsibilities of the DNFSB and current priority issues at Hanford.

cc: Board members