

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

August 21, 1998

TO: G.W. Cunningham, Technical Director

FROM: P.F. Gubanc, Oak Ridge Site Representative

SUBJ: Activity Report for Week Ending August 21, 1998

I visited DNFSB-Headquarters on Wednesday to support a Y-12 Board briefing.

A. Y-12 ISMS Review: On August 18, the DOE Y-12 Site Office (YSO) formally transmitted the ISMS verification report to LMES and requested a corrective action plan by October 1, 1998. The due date coincides with LMES' current schedule to complete ISMS implementation in Y-12's "Balance of Plant" (BOP) organizations. Also the YSO letter commits to a followup ISMS Phase II verification to assess the consistency of ISMS across Y-12 after BOP implementation (as recommended by the ISMS review team). The staff will review the LMES corrective action plan when it becomes available.

B. DOE Oak Ridge Operations (ORO) Cost Efficiency Initiative: On August 19, the LMES President announced to Y-12 the "Whitestone Initiative"; an ORO-wide, DOE-contractor effort to "identify and eliminate requirements which do not promote cost-effective operations." The information-gathering stage is underway and will continue until mid-October. Cost efficiency suggestions will be evaluated by a joint ORO-contractor board. My own experience with similar efforts is that eliminating inefficiency often gets confused with eliminating requirements which of themselves are reasonable and appropriate. If key procedures are mistakenly eliminated, the resulting confusion and subsequent recovery can diminish safety and consume the intended cost savings. I have communicated these concerns to LMES and DOE management.

C. Y-12 Enriched Uranium Operations (EUO): On August 18 and 19, the DOE ORR team for the EUO Phase-A2 restart visited Y-12 to conduct familiarization tours and review their criteria review and approach documents (CRADs) with EUO. EUO management expressed confidence that they would meet their current schedule (LMES ORR starts September 28). The carbon burners remain the critical path although problems with burner #3 appear resolved; burner #4 is still being worked.

D. Tour of ORNL Waste Management Facilities: On August 21, I toured the ORNL radioactive waste management facilities with the cognizant ORO Facility Representative (e.g., gunite tanks, burial grounds, spent fuel storage). The Fac Rep was very knowledgeable and demonstrated a questioning attitude. During this visit, I also attended an ORO briefing on remediation planning for both the Melton Valley and Bethel Valley regions. Feasibility Studies for both regions are to be submitted for TN State review by the end of this year. Of particular note is that most of the remediation options will remove significant volumes of waste although a location for this waste has not been confirmed. The majority of the "Oak Ridge Reservation End Use Working Group" (i.e., voluntary citizens group) supports establishing a waste disposal facility in East Bear Creek Valley for this waste material.

cc: Board members