DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

October 22, 1999

MEMORANDUM FOR: G. W. Cunningham, Technical Director
J. Kent Fortenberry, Deputy Technical Director
FROM: C. H. Keilers / R. T. Davis
SUBJECT: SRS Report for Week Ending October 22, 1999

A Board and staff team was on site this week reviewing the Tritium Extraction Facility design.

Follow-up on FB Line Contamination: On Thursday, WSRC management ordered a stand down of non-safety-related radiological work in FB Line until further notice. The WSRC investigation of the September 1, 1999 occurrence has determined that radiological controls need to be improved (their report is expected next week). A subsequent WSRC review also found radiological work deficiencies and a lack of increased worker sensitivity to radiological controls. Workers did respond correctly to a sample vial leak that occurred this week. Essentially, FB Line is a challenging radiological environment and requires the best in radiological control practices.

In other areas, the DOE Type B investigation continues, at least until November 5. SRTC may begin destructive examination of the defective bagless transfer can within the next week. (3.a)

Recommendation 94-1: The need for improved complex-wide integration, as well as consideration of technical risk in the budgetary process, continues to be apparent. The following are noteworthy:

- DOE-SR is poised to stop work related to shipping fluoride residues from Rocky Flats to SRS because the work is unfunded and the material's disposition path is now uncertain. On Monday, DOE-SR informed EM-60 that residue characterization and shipping container safety analysis and certification would cost an additional $1.2M and take 17 months until first shipment. Rocky Flats would like to begin shipments in mid-2000. The SRS experience with sand, slag, and crucible appears to be a factor in the DOE-SR decision (see site rep report, 8/20/99).

- It has been reported that the DOE Chief Financial Officer has agreed with pursuing the TVA interagency agreement for highly enriched uranium (HEU) disposition but has instructed EM and MD to fund this effort internally. This appears to require EM and MD to redirect $38M and $10M, respectively, in FY 01 from other programs. This will be challenging. Also, on Friday, WSRC submitted to DOE-SR project documentation equivalent to a conceptual design report.

- Because of shortfalls of $8M and $7M in FY 00 and FY 01, respectively, the Americium-Curium (AmCm) vitrification project is strongly considering contracting out most of the detailed design and construction (site rep report 9/17/99). Major components (e.g., the melter) would be government furnished. The main advantage appears to be pushing some FY 00 costs into FY 01 when optimistically more funding might be available. The disadvantage is more diffuse project management by WSRC. Bid package specifications are expected to be ready in December.

- Aging infrastructure remains a factor. For example, a leak has developed in the transfer path from HB Line to H Canyon and is holding up work. A path forward is being developed. (3.a)