

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

December 3, 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 December 3, 1999

Staff teams were on site this week reviewing tritium facility design and operation (Bamdad, Burns, DeLoach, Shields), readiness of the Replacement High Level Waste Evaporator (Zull, Drain), and operator interface issues with digital control systems (White).

Recommendation 94-1: DOE-EM remains reluctant to seek more funding for SRS to meet 94-1 commitments. Therefore, SRS continues to be challenged to meet the multiple-year commitments within the site's existing out-year budget. This issue is longstanding (e.g., site rep report 4/23/99).

Given level out-year funding, executing the current implementation plan would require redirecting roughly 8-10% of the site's EM budget (\$1.22B) in FY-01 and later. This could impact activities such as environmental remediation and high level waste operations (e.g., DWPF). DOE-SR has been reluctant to provide new commitment dates since there is insufficient funding by a wide margin (about \$100M per year) to execute the current strategy on any reasonable schedule.

Any opportunity to find additional funding appears to be fading. Consequently, DOE-SR is reexamining site-wide risks and priorities. This is unlikely to lead to different conclusions without a change in decision criteria that are largely influenced by regulators, outside stakeholders, and DOE-EM. DOE-SR is also looking at other ways to achieve most of the 94-1 risk reduction with level out-year funding, such as possibly restarting the FB-Line D-1 dissolver and converting all the plutonium oxide to metal. Studies on that option are expected in January. This and other changes would likely cause a radical departure from the current implementation plan. DOE-SR has a goal to develop a new meaningful plan by April 2000 that is within the current budget and has measurable interim milestones. (3.a)

Replacement High Level Waste Evaporator (RHLWE): This week, the DOE Operational Readiness Review (ORR) team completed their field work and provided a draft report. Their findings include 5 pre-starts, 3 post-starts, and 6 observations. The pre-start findings involve the startup test plan, system status control, procedure change control, procedure errors, and steam orifice inspection frequency. The Board's staff (Zull and Davis) verified closure of facility-specific issues identified in the Board's recent letter (11/22/99). Radioactive operations are scheduled to begin December 16 after closure of pre-start findings to DOE-SR satisfaction. (3.a)

K-Area Material Storage (KAMS): The DOE ORR will start December 13. The WSRC ORR report is due by next Tuesday. At this time, WSRC pre-start findings involve security activities and access time for emergency responders. WSRC considers a leaky 3013 container within a damaged 9975 to be incredible; therefore, contingency planning for shipping a damaged container to F-Area is a post-start item and will focus only on criticality controls. RFETS interface issues are to be addressed by increased oversight and inspection at RFETS (site-rep weekly 11/19/99). (3.a)

Readiness Assessments (RAs): A DOE RA for F-Canyon 2nd cycle plutonium will start next week. RAs will also occur mid-month for restart of the HB-Line low assay plutonium run. (3.a)