

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

October 28, 2005

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director  
**FROM:** J. S. Contardi/M.T. Sautman, SRS Site Representatives  
**SUBJECT:** SRS Report for Week Ending October 28, 2005

**DNFSB Site Activity:** Board Chairman, A. J. Eggenberger, and Board members, J. E. Mansfield, R. B. Matthews, and J. F. Bader were on-site Thursday along with staff members J. K. Fortenberry, D. G. Ogg, and H. W. Massie. Site personnel briefed the Board on several site activities. Specific areas of interest to the Board included high-level waste management, nuclear material stabilization and storage, site-wide safety issues, and startup activities for the Tritium Extraction Facility. In addition, Board member J. F. Bader spent Tuesday and Wednesday meeting with site personnel and walking down various defense nuclear facilities.

**Saltstone Operations:** In preparation for the upcoming restart of the Saltstone Production Facility, the contractor identified a discrepancy with the vendor provided fly ash for grout production. The fly ash meets industrial specifications, but the particle size is substantially smaller than previous procurements (4 microns versus 40 microns). An immediate result of the smaller particle size is the inability to transfer the material using the currently configured equipment. The contractor has developed a path forward to address this issue, which includes potential equipment modifications and identification of vendors who can meet minimum particle size requirements. In parallel, the contractor is implementing a testing program to ensure the smaller fly ash will produce a grout matrix that meets performance expectations. While these issues are addressed, the Readiness Assessment (RA) has been delayed and will likely not begin until early next year.

**Tank 5:** Sludge in tank 5 is being mixed for 10-days with submersible mixer pumps in preparation for a bulk waste transfer out of tank 5 next week. Three leaks have been identified with the annulus cameras, but the leak rates have been very slow.

**H-Canyon:** The Department of Energy (DOE) approved the Justification for Continued Operations for the operation of the leaking decanter (10/7/05 Site Rep report). The failed nuclear incident monitors (NIM) were replaced and multiple surge protectors installed (10/21/05 Site Rep report) which allowed nuclear operations to resume. The investigation concluded that an external voltage surge was responsible for the NIM failures.

**Readiness Assessments:** In response to DOE's letter and lessons learned from the Waste-on-Wheels RA, the contractor is reviewing 28 initiatives to strengthen facility/project readiness, the RA Plan of Action, and RA team readiness. The RA procedure will be revised by December 31 to incorporate those initiatives chosen for inclusion or reinforcement. The contractor wants to make sure that any changes made do not preclude the options for tailoring the RA scope. The contractor is also establishing a new position, Manager of Readiness Assurance. This manager will be responsible for implementing and overseeing nuclear activity startup/restart requirements.