

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

July 4, 2003

TO: K. Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: D. Grover and M. Sautman, Hanford Site Representatives
SUBJ: Activity Report for the Week Ending July 4, 2003

Spent Nuclear Fuel Project (SNFP): A Fluor Hanford (FH) independent assessment team has been evaluating the readiness preparations for the Sludge Water System (SWS) Operational Readiness Review (ORR) this week. This team is led by a outside contractor with experience with SNFP and sludge project, he recently led the T Plant sludge receipt readiness assessment and was a former manager of the DOE Richland (DOE_RL) Spent Fuel Office. The team is chartered to evaluate the re-performance of 33 of the 68 readiness self assessment forms. At the time of discussions with the team lead only 4 of the 33 were judged to be acceptable, 5 others had not had not been reviewed fully. It should be noted that the individual responsible for mentoring the SNFP management in the expectations for completing RSAs was released from the project 1 month prior to the declaration of readiness and was not replaced until approximately 2 months after the suspension of the ORR. Having this mentor in place was one of the actions identified by DOE as being taken to address continuing readiness preparation problems in response to the Board letter of March 7, 2003.

The performance of dry runs have also continued to be problematic. Due to an excessive number of changes, the process of conducting dry runs under formal operating requirements was halted to facilitate the completion of the procedures. These procedures will need to be reperformed prior to the declaration of readiness. The resumption of the SWS ORR has also been complicated by difficulties in properly sealing the shipping cask for the sludge container. These problems are likely to add several more weeks of delay before the resumption of the ORR.

In addition to the line management review, the DOE-RL engineering support division is conducting an assessment of the SNFP engineering assessment of the SWS performed in response to the ORR suspension. The DOE assessment has identified a potential issue with the use of the Unreviewed Safety Question (USQ) categorical exclusion for editorial changes for design changes to product specifications. Some of the product specification changes in question appear to have the potential to impact safety. The FH assessment was to include a review of nuclear safety and the improper use of these categorical exclusions. The staff will continue to review the resolution of these issues. (I-C, III-A)

The project continues to experience equipment problems with the K-West basin fuel processing equipment. Recently the robotic manipulators were removed from the basin and replaced with long handled tools for manipulating fuel on the primary process table. In addition, the shuttle used to move fuel baskets from the storage queue to the Multi-Canister Overpack (MCO) loading crane jammed in place requiring its removal from the basin and replacement with the shuttle originally planned to be installed in the K-East Basin. These problems led to a recent 1 MCO per week production level complicating acceleration plans for fuel removal. (III-A)