

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

July 11, 2003

MEMORANDUM FOR: J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director
J. J. McConnell, Deputy Technical Director
FROM: R. T. Davis/ T. D. Burns
SUBJECT: SRS Report for Week Ending July 11, 2003

Depleted Uranium: Recent receipt inspections of depleted uranium trioxide material being shipped to Envirocare of Utah from SRS under a pilot disposition program have revealed problems with the integrity of the rail-car shipping configuration (site rep weekly 6/27/03). The poly-ethylene wrapper that is placed around the drums in the rail-car as the strong/tight confinement barrier is developing small holes under the drum pallets due to vibration during transit. Shipments have been suspended pending selection of an alternative shipping configuration.

WSRC and its shipping vendor are pursuing a double wrapper approach and expects that this will allow pilot shipments to resume early next week. Despite these delays, the pilot disposition program remains ahead of schedule.

Accelerated Cleanup: Last Thursday, an Idaho federal district court judge ruled the waste incidental to reprocessing (WIR) evaluation process outlined in DOE Order 435.1, *Radioactive Waste Management* is inconsistent with the requirements of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act and therefore invalid. This decision effectively vitiates the current accelerated clean-up plan for the site's high-level waste system since this plan has a fundamental reliance on the WIR process for dispositioning salt-cake and closing tanks.

This week's scheduled transfer of dissolved salt-cake from Tank 41 to Tank 50 has been cancelled (site rep weekly 7/4/03). Similarly, preparations for closing Tanks 18 and 19 have been suspended. DOE and WSRC are evaluating alternative strategies for mitigating the severe negative impacts of the court's ruling on the current accelerated cleanup plans.

HEU Blend Down: On Monday, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission formally notified the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) vendor, Nuclear Fuel Services, that their material license had been amended to authorize receipt of blended Low Enriched Uranium (LEU) from SRS. Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU) blend down and loading activities at HA-Line had been on hold pending this action (site rep weekly 6/20/03). On Wednesday, WSRC began loading LEU solutions into shipping containers.

F-Canyon: As noted last week, WSRC identified solids blocking the bottoms overflow line in the 8.5 evaporator in F-Canyon. Sample analysis indicates that the solids contain tributyl phosphate (TBP), TBP degradation products and metallic solids. WSRC evaluation indicates that the amount of TBP is within safety basis limits. WSRC investigation and path forward for this evaporator continue. In the interim, the General Purpose Evaporator in outside facilities will be used for emergent waste streams.