

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

March 26, 2004

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 March 26, 2004

Board staff members Farid Bamdad and Roy Kasdorf were on-site this week to discuss DOE's progress on responding to proposals identified in the Board's December 2003 report to congress on plutonium storage at SRS. The Board and the Secretary of Energy are required to provide an update to Congress in June 2004. For KAMS, WSRC is updating the safety and fire hazards analyses. Once these analyses are complete, DOE will evaluate combustible loading and fire detection and suppression options. For 235-F, WSRC is updating the facility safety and structural analyses. This effort should be complete in late 2004.

Salt Waste Processing Facility Project: On Tuesday, DOE-SR issued a letter of direction to Parsons Infrastructure and Technology Group instructing them not to proceed with preliminary design of the Salt Waste Processing Facility at this time due to legal uncertainties associated with a July 2003 federal court decision invalidating waste classification provisions of DOE Order 435.1, *Radioactive Waste Management*. This direction countermands a February 25, 2004 letter from DOE-SR to Parsons approving commencement of preliminary design. This action will delay progress on a salt decontamination project which is of fundamental importance to the success of stabilization and clean-up activities at the Savannah River Site.

D-Area Brush Fire: On Wednesday, a brush fire occurred in D-Area which burned between 3 and 5 acres of grassland adjacent to Building 420-D – a radiological facility scheduled for demolition. The site fire department responded and successfully extinguished the fire. Fortunately, the fire did not reach Building 420-D and there were no personnel injuries.

The cause of the fire appears to be molten copper debris from an over-heated power line connection. The power line in question is part of the original site infrastructure installed nearly 50 years ago. Though this section has subsequently been repaired, hundreds of miles of electrical distribution system in similar condition exist on-site. Further assessment of electrical distribution system vulnerabilities and development of a prioritized corrective action plan appears to be warranted.

Depleted Uranium Disposition: As noted earlier this year (site rep weekly 1/9/2004), WSRC has made significant progress in the disposition of excess depleted uranium (DU) in FY 2004. However, WSRC has now suspended disposition activities for the remainder of this fiscal year because of budget constraints. Limited DU oxide will be loaded on railcars for shipment late this year. In addition, WSRC plans to transfer DU solutions from F-Area to H-Area to allow deactivation activities in F-Area to continue. Disposition activities will resume in FY 2005 provided adequate funding is available.