

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

September 8, 2000

TO: K. Fortenberry, Technical Director

FROM: M. Sautman and S. Stokes, Hanford Site Representatives

SUBJ: Activity Report for the Week Ending September 8, 2000

Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP): The Department of Energy (DOE) Operational Readiness Review (ORR) team identified 9 pre-start findings and 4 post-start findings for the magnesium hydroxide precipitation process. The pre-start findings address operating procedure errors, uncontrolled procedure changes during pre-operational testing, the filtrate waste disposal system, conduct of operations, and occupational safety issues. The ORR team concluded that PFP was not ready when readiness was declared for the contractor and DOE ORRs based on 3 issues.

- 1) The filtrate waste disposal utility system was not ready for startup at the beginning of the contractor ORR. The contractor ORR excluded this system from the scope of their ORR although DOE Order 425.1 requires readiness of utility systems.
- 2) The operating and maintenance procedures were not ready for use. The procedures had not been adequately validated and they required a final Unreviewed Safety Question screen. The screening was noted in the startup plan, but not in the manageable list of incomplete items for either ORR.
- 3) Safety Evaluation Report requirements regarding thermal hazards from the hot plate had not been resolved prior to beginning the contractor ORR. (3-A)

Spent Nuclear Fuel Project: The Phase III/IV readiness assessment (RA) began this week. Timely completion of the RA has been hampered significantly by issues which interrupted the operation of the fuel retrieval system, e.g., equipment failures, ineffective procedures, and unanticipated events not covered by procedures. These issues have delayed an activity originally scheduled for a single shift for the past 4 days and significantly limited the RA team's ability to assess the contractor's ability to operate the plant effectively. The contractor RA will continue into next week and will likely require further demonstrations of the FRS/IWTS.

Mr. Stokes met with Mr. Dave Van Lueven, Fluor Hanford (FH), to discuss a study underway to determine the feasibility of moving sent nuclear fuel currently in K-East Basin to K-West Basin for packaging. Mr. Van Lueven has created two teams which will evaluate, independently, the issues associated with moving fuel from K-East Basin to K-West Basin and addressing concerns being raised about construction and operational difficulties associated with the current baseline. The preliminary results of this review will be available within the next 2 weeks and will be used to determine whether a K-East/K-West fuel movement option is worth further development. This preliminary study will contain insufficient information to defensibly change the current baseline, installation of a FRS/IWTS/CLS in K-East Basin. (1-C)

cc: Board Members