

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

November 30, 2001

TO: J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director

FROM: Paul F. Gubanc, Oak Ridge Site Representative

SUBJ: Activity Report for Week Ending November 30, 2001

I was on annual leave Monday. Dr. Forsbacka reports as the 2nd Site Rep Monday, December 3.

A. DOE Oak Ridge Operations - Environmental Management (DOE-ORO/EM): DOE's report in response to the Board's October 15th letter was due November 29th. The Board letter asserted that DOE-ORO and its EM contractor, Bechtel Jacobs Company (BJC), had lost control over the safety authorization bases (AB) for their nuclear facilities and "Absent a comprehensive set of safety controls and supporting safety analyses, it is not credible to assert that the public, workers and the environment are protected from the hazards of these facilities." Despite this concern, DOE-ORO and BJC had not established a defensible basis for continuing operations until the DOE-HQ AB review is done. At my prompting, BJC, DOE-ORO/EM, and I spent five hours on November 30th reviewing the bases for continued operations for all of BJC's category 2 and 3 nuclear facilities (includes tanks, trenches, vaults, etc.). Observations follow:

1. The BJC Vice President & General Manager (Mr. Clay) and the DOE-ORO/EM Assistant Manager (Mr. Nelson) attended the entire session and endorsed all determinations and compensatory measures. A documented record of their decisions is expected by Monday.
2. BJC made an outstanding effort to provide the necessary information and personnel to support the decision-making process.
3. 83 facilities were deemed to have hazard inventories, stored energy and operating conditions which do not represent a major hazard to the public or workers (e.g., capped burial grounds, inactive facilities receiving only routine, non-intrusive surveillance and maintenance). In many cases, these routine operations were prescribed in the authorization basis and depended upon to maintain facility safety and ensure environmental regulatory compliance.
4. 37 facilities were judged to require certain specific compensatory measures to minimize risk or to facilitate the performance of risk reduction activities which in themselves added risk (e.g., handling and cleaning UF₆ cylinders to conduct refurbishment). Also included in this group are facilities currently restricted by DOE (e.g., suspension of fissile material handling).
5. 3 facilities presented insufficient evidence to justify continued operations and were tasked to a) limit operations to those essential for safety and compliance, b) collect, provide and get

agreement for continued operations within one business day, and c) evaluate the implications of a 60 day curtailment in operations should the justification still prove inadequate.

6. DOE-ORO/EM and BJC will use the insights from this effort to prioritize the order of review by the DOE-Headquarters AB review team (now due to arrive December 10th). (1-C)

B. Oak Ridge Regional Emergency Management Forum: On Tuesday, DOE-ORO held a meeting with state and local representatives of emergency response organizations associated with Oak Ridge. While the information exchanged was high level, the forum reached agreement that future meetings would be welcomed and could focus on resolving specific interface issues. (1-C)

cc: Board Members