

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

February 26, 1999

TO: G. W. Cunningham, Technical Director

FROM: R. Arcaro, & D. G. Ogg, Hanford Site Representatives

SUBJ: Activity Report for the Week Ending February 26, 1999

Staff member S. Stokes was on site this week to review waste characterization, K Basins sludge processing studies and groundwater/vadose zone work.

A. Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP): PFP completed its decision analyses required to support several commitments made in the DOE 94-1 Implementation Plan. Decisions addressed included:

- ! Whether to thermally stabilize Pu metals or simply brush and package them.
- ! Whether to use MgOH precipitation or ion exchange as part of solution stabilization.
- ! Whether to locate the pyrolysis unit for stabilizing polycubes at PFP or PNNL.
- ! Whether to stabilize sand, slag, and crucible at PFP or the Savannah River Site.

The analyses highlighted the uncertainty that remains in the path forward at PFP. The analyses did not have the benefit of an integrated plant schedule; therefore, the conclusions were limited by a lack of detailed consideration of the critical path and resource constraints. This information is being developed by the PFP "War Room" but was not available in detail for the analyses. Senior management must consider this uncertainty as it makes its final decisions by February 28.

B. Spent Nuclear Fuel Project: On February 23, Mr. Ogg toured the KW Basin to observe equipment installation activities. Major pieces of Integrated Water Treatment System (IWTS) equipment have begun to arrive on site, and basin preparations for installation of this equipment are largely complete. Construction work to support the installation of the Fuel Retrieval System (FRS) process table and equipment also continues. Risk of mutual interferences and delays in these activities is significant and project management has established an integrated construction schedule accompanied by weekly coordination meetings to anticipate and resolve any difficulties.

C. FY 2001 Integrated Priorities List: Mr. Arcaro attended a public meeting at which DOE-RL stated their priorities for the FY 2001 budget request. As reported in an announcement to all RL employees, "RL will request funding for all "critical needs," i.e. safety compliance, . . . regulatory compliance, and Defense Nuclear Facility[ies] Safety Board compliance requirements." RL also identified as the "two top site priorities," moving spent nuclear fuel away from the river and the tank waste privatization effort. However, because DOE-HQ is requiring the RL budget to remain flat at \$1.065B, the FY 2001 request reflects deficits in several site programs including shortfalls of \$24M for plutonium stabilization activities at PFP and \$5.3M for characterization of miscellaneous underground storage tanks.

cc: Board members