

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

March 26, 1999

TO: G. W. Cunningham, Technical Director

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

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

Staff members David Grover, David Moyle, Dudley Thompson and Jessica West were on site this week reviewing the Spent Nuclear Fuel Project and Plutonium Finishing Plant activities.

A. Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP): Thermal stabilization of plutonium oxide continued this week. There is enough oxide feed material to keep the two furnaces in use for several months while readiness and approval for other feed types is approved. The next expected feed material for stabilization is plutonium-bearing sludges. These sludges may contain organics and their stabilization is therefore more hazardous.

A drill intended to demonstrate the emergency preparedness of the combined Babcock and Wilcox - Lockheed Martin team responsible for venting Tank Z-361 was scheduled for this week. While preparing for the drill, the fire department was required to respond to a high chlorine alarm in a water treatment facility on site. This action caused the drill to be canceled. (The chlorine alarm occurred while changing out chlorine tanks in a water treatment facility. The facility was evacuated and then ventilated and returned to normal within 2 hours.) The cancellation of the drill was yet another disruption in the schedule to vent Tank Z-361. Currently the project is approximately 6 months behind schedule. Even prior to this week's delay, DOE-RL had formally communicated its frustration with the project's progress in a letter to Fluor Daniel Hanford (FDH) President, Ron Hanson. In the letter, DOE-RL holds FDH responsible for the delays and requires them to submit an aggressive recovery plan and schedule.

B. Spent Nuclear Fuel Project (SNFP): On March 22, project personnel briefed DOE-RL and state regulators on the flaw in the cask drop analysis for KW Basin. Management expects further analysis to last until April 8 when a path forward will be proposed. In the meantime, Cask Loadout System work at KW Basin is on hold.

Similarly, a DOE team met Tuesday to review the Probabilistic Risk Assessment for a Multi-canister Overpack (MCO) drop at the Canister Storage Building. The team found insufficient evidence to support project analysts' claims that the drop is incredible (i.e. probability $< 1 \times 10^{-6}/\text{yr}$). Resolution of this issue may require design changes to the MCO tubes or impact limiters and will delay the final installation of the MCO tubes.

C. 233-S Readiness Assessment (RA): On March 22, Bechtel Hanford Inc. (BHI) began its RA for remaining D&D activities at the 233-S Plutonium Concentration Facility. The BHI RA close-out is planned for March 29, and the DOE-RL RA should begin in early April.

cc: Board members