

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

September 15, 2000

TO: J. K. Fortenberry, Technical Director

FROM: D. F. Owen, D. J. Grover, RFETS Site Representatives

SUBJECT: RFETS Activity Report for the Week Ending September 15, 2000

This was David Grover's last week at RFETS pending his move to Hanford later this month. **Work Control.** Problems with work control continue at RFETS (and Building 771 in particular) wherein work scope changes have been performed by operations personnel that have not been formally defined, evaluated for hazards, and properly authorized by facility management (see site rep. reports of June 30, July 14, July 21, and August 25, 2000). This week, workers removing a non-structural wall near glovebox lines in Building 771 also removed an adjacent instrument air line causing air monitors to alarm and spreading contamination. Fortunately, due to unrelated activities in another part of the room, respiratory protection was being used and no radiological uptakes are expected. Removal of the instrument air line was not addressed in the work planning effort including the applicable Job Hazard Analysis, and respiratory protection was not required for the planned work. Following this occurrence, a top Kaiser-Hill management official has started a full-time effort to address the work control problems in Building 771. (1-C)

Recommendation 94-1. As we reported on September 1, 2000, the DOE 94-1 Implementation Plan milestone to complete Ash residue repackaging by December 31, 2000 was at risk due to recent reduced repackaging rates and Kaiser-Hills plans to halt Ash repackaging efforts in Building 707 later this year. DOE-RFFO had asked Kaiser-Hill to provide a recovery plan detailing how the milestone will be met.

This week, Kaiser-Hill submitted a response to DOE-RFFO that did not provide a recovery plan. Rather, Kaiser-Hill stated that Ash repackaging will continue in Building 707 only until the need to stop to support the planned Protected Area reconfiguration date of January 1, 2001. Storage and repackaging of remaining Ash would be performed in Building 371, but no completion date was provided. The site rep. discussed with DOE-RFFO personnel the apparent override of a DOE 94-1 Implementation Plan commitment by local site closure efforts without supporting justification. The site rep. also discussed the need for DOE to address such a course of action with the Board prior to implementation. DOE-RFFO personnel stated that the Kaiser-Hill response is being evaluated and additional information on such a course of action is being obtained by DOE-RFFO. (3-A)

Plutonium Stabilization and Packaging System (PuSPS). The project has experienced delays in connecting the PuSPS to the Building 371 ventilation system. PuSPS startup is now currently scheduled for mid-December 2000. The PuSPS project has identified that the sintered metal filter in the inner can bung may not confine contamination as had been assumed. This filter forms part of the contamination boundary between the inner can loading glovebox and inner can welding fume hood after the inner can is welded and cut. As a result, PuSPS project personnel stated that the pressure in the fume hood may need to be kept at a higher level than the glovebox except when welding as suggested in the report forwarded by the Board's April 25, 2000 letter.