

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

June 26, 1998

TO: G. W. Cunningham, Technical Director

FROM: D. G. Ogg, Hanford Site Representative

SUBJ: Activity Report for Week Ending June 26, 1998

Staff members Ralph Arcaro and Steven Stokes were on site assisting with Site Representative duties.

A. Spent Nuclear Fuel Project (SNFP): Due to uncertainty in the basis for the new proposed SNFP baseline, DOE-RL has initiated a review to validate cost and schedule estimates. This "Validation Team" consists of five DOE-RL and Fluor-Duke employees, and will begin detailed sub-project reviews on June 29. The team hopes to understand the methods used to make cost, schedule, and confidence estimates, and to check for consistency and adherence to DOE procurement and budget guidance. The site representative office has requested a copy of the charter for this review team and will forward it when received.

The site representatives toured the Canister Storage Building construction site on June 23. Building construction is complete with the exception of erecting the vault 1 exhaust stack and the cover for the vault 1 intake stack. Electrical, air and ventilation system acceptance testing continues to proceed on schedule. Most MCO Handling Machine (MHM) components are on site and staged inside the CSB. The contractor will assemble the MHM after the hoist component arrives and DOE-RL approval is given.

B. Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP): Babcock & Wilcox Hanford Co. (BWHC) continues to develop corrective actions for the criticality safety infraction that occurred on June 2. BWHC and DOE-RL have identified a number of procedural and conduct of operations problems that contributed to the event. A similar lack of attention to detail to criticality safety requirements caused PFP to curtail fissile material handling in December 1996. DOE-RL is currently evaluating necessary corrective action for this event, including the use of experts or "mentors" to achieve needed operational improvements. Given the risk of continued storage of potentially unstable and dispersible plutonium bearing compounds at PFP, DOE-RL is reluctant to again place a hold on fissile material handling.

C. Tank Waste Remediation System (TWRS): On June 25, Lockheed Martin Hanford Co. (LMHC) personnel successfully retrieved a sample drill string that was dropped into tank SX-102 last week. The drill string is currently secured in one of the tank risers and may be used for future sampling, pending determination of the cause of the drop and completion of corrective action.

cc: Board members