

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

December 17, 1999

TO: G. W. Cunningham, Technical Director
K. Fortenberry, Deputy Technical Director

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

SUBJECT: RFETS Activity Report for the Week Ending December 17, 1999

Recommendation 94-1: The Plutonium Stabilization and Packaging System (PuSPS) project began installing the modifications to the welding system to allow welding the test coupons needed to qualify the outer canister welds to the ASME requirements in compliance with DOE-STD-3013. The qualification effort is currently scheduled to be completed the first week of January 2000. PuSPS operator training and procedure walk-throughs and validations have been taking longer than expected. As a result, the date for the start of packaging following readiness reviews is projected to be February 10, 2000. This schedule would not support meeting the Recommendation 94-1 Implementation Plan milestone to start material packaging by January 2000. The project is working certain actions to recover the schedule.

The Recommendation 94-1 Implementation Plan also states that all scrub alloy (alloyed buttons of plutonium and americium) will be shipped from RFETS to SRS by November 1999. This schedule was not met due to a number of factors; RFETS now projects scrub alloy shipments to be completed by February 2000.

Building 371 Glovebox Window Failures. In late November, a wet combustible repackaging glovebox in Building 371 was discovered to have a window partially pulled into a glovebox when a passerby heard air being drawn into the glovebox. Further evaluation showed one window to be entirely out of position, three more partially out of position, and an additional seven with the window retaining ring not installed properly. While these conditions resulted in the loss of the window seal, the leaded glass and plexiglass shield windows provided sufficient confinement to prevent the spread of contamination outside of the glovebox. A visual examination showed that the windows appeared to have been constructed to the design drawings. Additional evaluations are planned to determine if the proper window gaskets were used and to correct the identified deficiencies.

Building 779 Complex. As a result of the progress of deactivation and decontamination activities in the Building 779 complex, DOE-RFFO has approved the re-categorization of the complex, with the exception of Building 782, as industrial facilities (i.e., containing less than 16 g of plutonium). Building 782, housing the ventilation filter plenums, has been downgraded to a Hazard Category 3 nuclear facility.

cc: Board Members