

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

December 30, 1999

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** G. W. Cunningham, Technical Director  
J. Kent Fortenberry, Deputy Technical Director  
**FROM:** C. H. Keilers / R. T. Davis  
**SUBJECT:** SRS Report for Week Ending December 31, 1999

**WSRC Award Fee:** In mid-December, DOE-SR informed WSRC that they had earned \$19.9M of the available \$24.8M contract award fee for the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of FY99 (i.e., 80%). The award included a \$3M carryover from the previous period for validated productivity savings in excess of FY99 goals. On a percentage basis, this is a lower award than during the last period, mainly due to the FB-Line contamination event and lower rated performance for Recommendation 94-1 activities.

DOE-SR favorably commented on the WSRC commitment to Integrated Safety Management. Other positives included DWPF glass log production and the innovative efforts to extend melter life; the K-Area Material Storage (KAMS) project, particularly its cost effectiveness and on-schedule performance; the Americium-Curium (AmCm) vitrification project's progress and development of a high-confidence baseline; and both the Tritium Extraction Facility (TEF) and Tritium Consolidation and Modernization (TCON) projects' progress in design and construction.

DOE-SR expressed concern about several activities, particularly the personnel contamination occurrence in FB-Line, the continuing lack of an effective strategy to meet Recommendation 94-1 stabilization milestones within existing budgets, and the trend in procedural non-compliance and personnel inattention to detail (i.e., work controls). Other areas of concern included delays in preparing sludge batch #2 (which could result in a break in feed to DWPF) and the indeterminate rating recently given by a WIPP audit team on WSRC shipment preparations.

**Recommendation 94-1:** The DOE-SR award fee assessment warrants perspective since several issues can be traced to lack of stable corporate-level direction by DOE and the lack of sufficient funding to execute the current plan. Key budget decisions are expected next month.

WSRC had several major accomplishments during FY-99, including the APSF design; the AmCm preliminary design and integrated melter testing; F-Canyon plutonium sweepings and sand, slag, and crucible (SS&C) campaigns; H-Canyon Mark-16/22 dissolutions; FB-Line characterization cabinet startup and packaging of all existing SRS Pu metal; HB-Line low assay plutonium (Pu-238) campaign preparation and flow sheet improvements; and F-Canyon flow-sheet and shipping container analyses to support Rocky Flats SS&C processing.

However, WSRC did not anticipate emerging needs and the DOE reluctance to seek sufficient out-year funding, by a wide margin, to execute the current implementation plan. No back-up plan existed when APSF was deferred. WSRC has moved slowly to find a practical alternative. WSRC also did not anticipate the shipping issues or the direct disposal option for Rocky Flats SS&C, leading to a major disruption for F-Canyon. H-Canyon Phase III and HB-Line Phase II startup preparations were plagued by funding and staffing short-falls, emergent technical problems, and possibly resource competition from the Highly Enriched Uranium blend-down project. While WSRC is responsible and needs to clearly advise DOE, the contractor's chances of success would likely improve with stable direction and appropriate funding from DOE.