

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

October 24, 1997

**TO:** G.W. Cunningham, Technical Director

**FROM:** P.F. Gubanc & D.G. Ogg, Hanford Site Representatives

**SUBJ:** Activity Report for Week Ending October 24, 1997

A. Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP): Communications amongst DOE-RL, Fluor Daniel Hanford (FDH) and B&W Hanford (BWHC) have significantly improved this week. This is primarily attributable to the assignment of the single points of contact through whom all PFP resumption activities and expectations are being funneled.

**1. PFP Recovery Plan:** BWHC is formally revising the PFP recovery plan to clearly communicate what actions are being taken to address specific and systemic deficiencies. The revised plan is expected to be available next week.

**2. FDH Readiness Assessment (RA):** FDH has concluded that it should conduct a formal RA. The FDH RA plan is to be transmitted to DOE-RL on October 24.

**3. DOE-RL Line Management Oversight:** DOE-RL is still developing its formal lines of inquiry (LOI) to oversee PFP's resumption preparations. (This is separate from the DOE-RL RA.) Mr. Gubanc suggested that DOE-RL, FDH and BWHC develop a common set of LOIs to maximize mutual expectations and minimize duplicative effort.

BWHC now expects to declare readiness on October 31 (BWHC's fourth instance of needing "just one more week") although FDH's concurrence is expected to come one to two weeks later.

B. Spent Nuclear Fuel (SNF) Project: The five day delay to the SNF project schedule was recovered this week by management actions on procuring the First Article Testing vacuum process equipment for Cold Vacuum Drying (CVD). The SNF Project Execution Director this week directed that the critical path management "endpoint" be changed from *starting* fuel movement to *completing* fuel movement. This should find schedule problems not currently being worked.

C. Project Management: Over the last several weeks, the DNFSB staff has identified several major projects which suffer from weak project management, specifically the SNF project, the PFP resumption, and the site-wide corrective action effort stemming from the May 1997 PFP explosion. While not typically considered a technical skill, the absence of strong project management skills can have debilitating effects. We will discuss this further with DNFSB-HQ to evaluate to what extent our efforts should assess "project management."

D. Training of DOE-RL Program/Project Managers: During the Board's September 24 visit, considerable discussion was focused on the technical understanding and capabilities of DOE program and project managers. DOE is responding by conducting informal oral exams of TWRS project managers on their project's authorization basis and development of a "qualification card" for the new PFP program manager. To our knowledge, these are unprecedented actions at RL.

cc: Board members