

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

December 18, 1998

TO: G. W. Cunningham, Technical Director

FROM: R. Arcaro, & D. G. Ogg, Hanford Site Representatives

SUBJ: Activity Report for the Week Ending December 18, 1998

Ralph Arcaro reported Monday, December 14 for full time duty as a Hanford Site Representative.

A. Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP): B&W Hanford Co. (BWHC) continues to develop corrective action plans for the findings of the DOE Operational Readiness Review (15 pre-start findings, 6 post-start findings and 2 observations). The team leader for the DOE ORR expects that the ORR Final Report will be available by next week. The PFP Director reported that pre-start findings may be closed by the end of the month, and that thermal stabilization could start as early as the first full week of January. Note that there is neither a 94-1 Implementation Plan milestone nor a DOE-RL performance agreement (PA) for starting this operation. However, there is a PA for completing the oxide stabilization by September 1999.

B. Tritium Target Qualification Project: On December 17, Messrs. Arcaro and Ogg met with representatives of DOE-RL and Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL) for an update on the Tritium Target Qualification Project (TTQP). PNNL continues work on tritium target development for the Commercial Light Water Reactor Tritium Production Project (DP-62). PNNL scientists also continue to develop tritium extraction technologies at the lab's Building 325. Tritium targets in the "lead test assembly" are currently being irradiated in TVA's Watts Bar reactor, and should begin to arrive at PNNL for extraction in early CY 2000. The mission to fabricate production tritium targets, that DOE originally had planned for PNNL, is now likely to go to a private, commercial fabricator.

Last week, an upset condition in the tritium extraction system caused a release of approximately 79 curies of tritium from Building 325. While the annual permit requirements were not exceeded, PNNL shut down the process and is pursuing investigation and corrective action activities to prevent future releases.

C. Facility Representative Oral Board: DOE-RL management conducted the first Facility Representative (FR) oral board in several months. Mr. Ogg attended the board and observed that the oral board process is still formal, rigorous and well conducted. The FR candidate performed well and earned his qualification. Currently, DOE-RL has 14 additional FR candidates in the training pipeline, and will be conducting oral qualification boards throughout next year.

cc: Board members