

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

October 31, 1997

TO: G.W. Cunningham, Technical Director

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

SUBJ: Activity Report for Week Ending October 31, 1997

A. Spent Nuclear Fuel Project (SNFP): On October 28, Fluor Daniel Hanford (FDH) issued a letter to DOE-RL stating their intent to proceed with MCO basket procurement (first 30 units) from the Site Fabrication Shop. FDH management cites their local labor contract as the basis for this action although it is unclear whether FDH can actually deliver baskets with the proper quality pedigree and on-time without incurring excessive costs. Since the proposed procurement would not be fixed-price, as planned by the SNFP, the potential for cost overruns in FY98 and FY99 threatens additional budget shortfalls and subsequent further delays in meeting 94-1 milestones.

B. Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP): As noted below, several key documents and activities are expected over the next several weeks. Arrangements are in place to supplement our on-site review with DNFSB-HQ staff and outside experts.

1. **B&W Hanford (BWHC) Readiness**: BWHC intends to declare readiness to resume "Phase 1" (vault, lab and waste operations) fissile material handling on October 31. DOE-RL expects to approve the overall BWHC recovery plan also on October 31.
2. **FDH Readiness Assessment (RA)**: After a round of comment resolution, FDH delivered and DOE-RL expects to approve the FDH RA plan on October 31. The FDH RA of PFP Phase 1 restart will start next week and is expected to support an FDH declaration of readiness within two weeks (about November 14).
3. **DOE-RL RA**: Issuance of the revised DOE-RL RA plan is expected next week. DOE-RL's RA of Phase 1 is expected to require two weeks after FDH's declaration of readiness.

C. DOE-RL Staffing: Unlike much of DOE, DOE-RL is well below its manpower ceiling. Given the recent lifting of the "hold" on personnel actions, the DOE-RL Manager has asked his staff to identify critical staff needs which might be accommodated within the current ceiling. This may afford DOE-RL an opportunity to replenish its stock of good candidates for Facility Rep positions.

D. Other Activities: Mr. Ogg toured N-Basin and Mr. Gubanc toured the 324 lab on October 27.

- Bechtel Hanford, Inc. (BHI) continues to make progress in cleaning out N-Basin, but has had difficulties keeping equipment in operation. For example, water clarity was poor and one of the filter systems had been tagged out-of-service for several days. BHI is now working on third and fourth iteration designs for small debris collection and basin sludge relocation. Previous iterations appear to have been poorly designed, and have failed in operation.
- The sixteen off-spec Cs capsules at 324 lab have been overpacked (a welded enclosure) and are awaiting shipment to WESF. The high Cs/Sr activity "German Logs" have also been removed from 324 A-Cell and are now stored in casks on a outdoor slab in the 200 Area.

cc: Board members