

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

July 9, 1999

TO: G.W. Cunningham, Technical Director
FROM: Paul F. Gubanc and David T. Moyle, Oak Ridge Site Representatives
SUBJ: Activity Report for Week Ending July 9, 1999

A. Enriched Uranium Operations (EUO):

1. **Safety Basis:** On July 7, LMES submitted the latest revision of the EUO Basis for Interim Operations (BIO) and the Operational Safety Requirements (OSR) to DOE for approval. The revised documents incorporate the hydrogen fluoride (HF) system (consisting of HF supply, hydrogen supply, and the fluid beds) which is scheduled for a September ORR. Based on new evaluation guidelines discussed during a joint DOE and LMES safety analysis workshop last week, several structures systems and components that were previously classified as safety significant have been downgraded to defense-in-depth. The staff is reviewing the BIO to determine if application of the new evaluation guidelines is appropriate.
2. **Fluid Bed Pre-heaters:** This week, testing revealed that the pre-heater for the hydrogen fluid bed is not able to raise the incoming nitrogen to the desired temperature before the temperature limit on the heat exchanger vessel is reached. The plant is currently evaluating whether this is a design or a hardware problem and what possible solutions exist.
3. **Reduction Schedule:** Senior LMES management suggested this week that startup of the reduction process should be accelerated ahead of HF system startup. Both processes are currently slated for startup following a September ORR. If the EUO staff can support an earlier reduction startup, an early August 1999 staff review will be needed to support their schedule.
4. **Management Leadership:** Effective this week, the LMES VP for Defense Programs, Lew Felton, has been directed to focus on the EUO restart effort. We've observed Mr. Felton significantly challenging his staff on the pace and quality of their work. While definitely beneficial and overdue, we are still concerned that the application of rigorous configuration, test, and design controls are being viewed as administrative tasks. If such controls cannot be made highly reliable soon, the effort invested to conduct HF system walkdowns may be squandered. (I-A, II-B)

B. Chemical Hazard Assessments and Emergency Preparedness: We have discussed with senior DOE management the Board's July 8 letter regarding its concerns with DOE-OR responsiveness to DOE Headquarters directives and assessments. Mostly these discussions have focused on understanding the fundamental issues and supporting details. On Friday, the DOE Y-12 Site Office advised that, contrary to the staff's issue report, all compliance actions in their EH-2 assessment corrective action plan are now funded in FY2000. Interestingly:

5. It's not clear why this information was not provided to the staff at the time of our review.
6. Funding of these compliance actions came at the expense of Y-12 plant infrastructure maintenance and authorization basis improvements; both known problem areas.
7. The Y-12's FY2000 budget is significantly underfunded (potentially up to \$100M). Given the magnitude of this potential shortfall, major cost-cutting decisions are still being negotiated. (I-A)

C. DOE Facility Representative of the Year: Mr. Michael Glasman, a Y-12 Fac Rep, was selected as DOE's Fac Rep of the Year. On July 8, the newly arrived Oak Ridge Operations Office Manager, Ms. Leah Dever, highlighted Mr. Glasman's accomplishment in a DOE-OR all-hands meeting. In various recent meetings, Ms. Dever has stressed the value she places on Fac Reps. (I-B)

cc: Board Members