

September 22, 1995

NTS No. NTS-RL-WHC-BPLANT-1995-0001

Westinghouse Hanford Corporation
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[]
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Dear Sirs:

Subject: Noncompliance with 10 CFR 830.120 (Quality Assurance Requirements) at B Plant/Waste Encapsulation and Storage Facility

This letter refers to the Department of Energy's (DOE) evaluation of Westinghouse Hanford Company's (WHC) report of potential noncompliances with the requirements of 10 CFR 830.120 (Quality Assurance Requirements) at the Hanford B Plant/Waste Encapsulation Facility (WESF). These potential noncompliances were identified by WHC on May 8, 1995, during a self-initiated comprehensive assessment of the facilities Operational Safety Requirements (OSR) program and reported to DOE on May 24, 1995.

The WHC review of the OSR Program was initiated by the WESF facility director after two events occurred which provided indications that the OSR program at WESF was not being adequately implemented. This assessment included evaluation of existing OSRs, controlled plant documents, plant conditions and record keeping practices; and it identified significant deficiencies in the administrative program to assure OSR compliance, accuracy of certain OSRs, as well as configuration and management control of safety basis documentation.

Based on our evaluation of the findings and conclusions described in the assessment, DOE agrees that noncompliances with the requirements of 10 CFR 830.120, Criterion 4 (Documents and Records) and Criterion 5 (Work Processes) likely occurred. Specifically, there are inadequate work and document controls in place that ensure either compliance with the OSRs, or that current, controlled OSRs are effectively utilized to, among other things, identify limiting plant conditions or verify surveillance and plant configuration requirements. The staff from the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board reached similar conclusions as a result of their review of these facilities shortly after the completion of WHC's self assessment. Considered collectively, these deficiencies in the existing safety basis for B Plant/WESF have the potential to adversely affect the safe operation of the facilities.

DOE has evaluated the corrective action plan and schedule which was submitted to the office of Enforcement and Investigation on June 22,

1995, including those immediate corrective actions taken to ensure that the facility is being operated in a safe configuration. DOE recognizes that a number of the proposed corrective actions will take some time to be fully implemented and DOE has concluded that the plan constitutes a reasonable approach to the problem. Additionally, the DOE Richland B Plant/WESF line management has selectively sampled the implementation of certain of your short term corrective actions and has found them to be an acceptable and timely response to the assessment findings.

These corrective actions, coupled with WHC's continued proactive efforts to identify and report potential violations of nuclear safety requirements promulgated pursuant to the Price-Anderson Amendments Act of 1988 meet the discretionary criteria described in DOE's nuclear safety enforcement policy. Therefore, the exercise of discretion not to undertake enforcement action at this time is warranted. However, the final decision whether to refrain from taking an enforcement action is contingent upon the adequacy of implementation of both the short and longer term corrective actions. Before considering this matter fully resolved, DOE will evaluate the results of your follow-up comprehensive self-assessment which, according to the corrective action plan, is scheduled for January 1996, to verify that the appropriate corrective actions have been effectively implemented. A member of my staff will coordinate a review of the status of your corrective actions with the DOE Richland Price-Anderson Coordinator and the appropriate DOE line management after you have completed the assessment.

Sincerely,

R. Keith Christopher
Director
Office of Enforcement & Investigation