

WTP Safety Culture Advice Joint Topic (HSEP/TWC)

Framing questions for discussion regarding DOE's recently released Implementation Plan:

Re: Secretary Chu's response to the DNFSB with the Implementation Plan for Recommendation 2011-1 (December 27, 2011)

Note: The ORP coordinator for the DOE Response to DNFSB 2011-1 is Steve Pfaff.

- What are the planned actions, deliverables and timeframes?
Steve Pfaff: This information is outlined in the IP. Steve Pfaff will oversee coordination of specific actions and implementation for ORP.
- How will DOE assure the HAB and the public that DOE is implementing its plan?
Steve Pfaff: Besides meeting deliverable dates, ORP remains committed to openness and transparency with our stakeholders. We are currently evaluating which communication tool(s) will be most effective.
- How will DOE enforce the actions outlined in the plan, and what metrics will be used?
Steve Pfaff: Those at the highest level of federal control within the Department will direct, track, and validate the specific corrective actions in the IP at the WTP Project. The Secretary sets departmental expectations and the Under Secretary manages the Implementation Plan. The IP actions prescribe a long-term vision (See Part 5, Sustainment of Safety Culture) and sustainment of a robust safety culture is further discussed in section 5.2.4. ORP safety culture metrics are being evaluated.
- What specifically does DOE understand "Safety Culture" to mean in regard to the WTP design and ORP operations? What questions and procedures flow from this?
Steve Pfaff: The committees have been provided with the Secretary's memo regarding a strong nuclear safety culture (see linked below). The IP outlines which performance documents will be revised. An ORP policy for Nuclear Safety Culture is currently in development.

- Is there a process in the implementation plan that addresses plant design vulnerability, design concerns, and verification before the design phase is closed and construction proceeds?
Steve Pfaff: DNFSB Recommendation 2011-1 focuses on Safety Culture. Specific design concerns are currently being worked via other recommendations such as DNFSB 2010-2 (the committees have been provided this IP – can be found at: http://www.dnfsb.gov/search/apachesolr_search/Hanford%20Waste%20Treatment%20Plant). The Department continues to encourage its employees to use processes that are in place at ORP such as the Differing Professional Opinion and Employee Concerns Programs.

- How will DOE assure in this implementation plan that it is fixing its own broken systems (e.g. the Employee Concern Program)?
Steve Pfaff: The Department has taken steps to strengthen its Employee Concerns Program by leveraging resources and increasing site-wide visibility. ORP stands ready to respond to results of further assessments and recommendations to ensure continuous improvement. The 2011-1 Response Team and DOE Program Offices will develop guidance for safety culture assessments that will evaluate programs against standards such as those outlined in Section 4.2 of the IP.

- What are the short-term interim steps/actions to put safeguards in place while the plan is being implemented (e.g. compensatory measures)?
Steve Pfaff: Interim actions have been completed since issuance of DNFSB 2011-1 such as additional independent reviews (BNI and HSS), ORP announcements, Secretary memos, etc. Ongoing actions at ORP are in development.

Framing questions to identify issues not addressed in Implementation Plan:

- Does it make sense to thematically organize the advice points into separate pieces of advice?

- Are some potential advice points time-sensitive and, as such, should be brought to the Board in February?

- Would some potential advice points benefit from further deliberation and information-gathering, and be more appropriately addressed at the April or June Board meetings?