



U.S. Department of Energy
P.O. Box 450, MSIN H6-60
Richland, Washington, 99352

AUG - 3 2011

11-WTP-274

Mr. F. M. Russo, Project Director
Bechtel National, Inc.
2435 Stevens Center Place
Richland, Washington 99354

Dear Mr. Russo:

CONTRACT NO. DE-AC27-01RV14136 – APPROVAL FOR INSTALLATION OF VESSEL HEADS FOR THE FIVE NON-NEWTONIAN VESSELS, UFP-VSL-0002A/B, HLP-VSL-00027A/B, AND HLP-VSL-00028

- References:
1. BNI letter from R. W. Bradford to D. E. Knutson, DOE-WTP, "Recommendation for Installation of Vessel Top Heads for the Five Non-Newtonian Vessels, UFP-VSL-0002A/B, HLP-VSL-00027A/B, AND HLP-VSL-00028," CCN: 226344, dated July 7, 2011.
 2. Combined letter from D. E. Knutson, DOE-WTP and S. L. Charboneau, ORP to F. M. Russo, BNI, "Review Comment Record (RCR) for Installation of Vessel Top Heads for the Five Non-Newtonian Vessels, UFP-VSL-0002A/B, HLP-VSL-00027A/B, and HLP-VSL-00028, 11-NSD-056, dated August 2, 2011.

Bechtel National, Inc. (BNI) provided the deliverables established by the U.S. Department of Energy, Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant (DOE-WTP) for the vessel fabrication hold point and provided the contractor perspective on the impacts associated with the hold of fabrication of Non-Newtonian vessels for the Pretreatment Facility in Reference 1. BNI recommends installation of the vessel heads for the five Non-Newtonian vessels UFP-VSL-0002A/B, HLP-VSL-00027A/B, and HLP-VSL-00028.

Open technical issues regarding the adequacy of vessel mixing are being evaluated through Large Scale Integrated Testing (LSIT). DOE acknowledges that continuing fabrication of the vessels before the LSIT is complete has the potential to increase the cost and schedule risks for delivery if modifications are required. DOE also notes that continued delay of vessel fabrication may have irreversible impacts on the project schedule.

Attachment 1

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BNI recognizes that these vessels are on the critical path for the Pretreatment Facility completion schedule, and has identified reasonable and prudent options and actions to assess Non-Newtonian vessel performance. Their analysis determined that performance deficiencies identified after welding the vessel heads can be addressed without precluding any alternatives that may be required up to and including complete redesign.

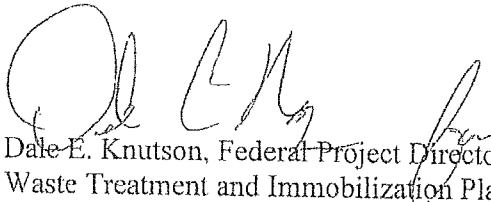
DOE-WTP has reviewed the references supporting BNI's recommendation to install the vessel heads for the five Non-Newtonian vessels. Comments associated with this review are attached and are expected to be resolved within the scope of the LSIT commitments. The issues identified in Reference 2 and the attached technical review shall inform the LSIT program, design validation, and other actions supporting verification of design. These issues must be effectively resolved before vessel installation precludes any required modifications.

Our review was conducted as part of the Department's continuing oversight of the LSIT and design verification activities to address the outstanding mixing concerns in these vessels. Based on this review, DOE concludes that the requirements supporting nuclear safety have not changed, that demonstration of the authorization basis requirements is part of the LSIT commitments, and that next steps in fabrication do not preclude anticipated modifications. DOE's review concluded that continuing with fabrication is a project risk-based decision taking into account the knowledge that design inputs for these vessels may change, and that any resulting modifications are not completely defined. Subsequently, DOE-WTP approves removal of the fabrication hold on welding of vessel heads for the subject vessels. This hold shall be replaced by an identical hold placed on vessel installation.

This letter is not considered to constitute a change to the Contract. In the event the Contractor disagrees with this interpretation, it must immediately notify the Contracting Officer orally, and otherwise comply with the requirements of the Contract clause entitled 52.243-7, "Notification of Changes."

If you have any questions, please contact me (509) 376-5166, or you may contact Wahed Abdul, Federal Project Manager for the Pretreatment Facility, (509) 438-0455.

Sincerely,


Dale E. Knutson, Federal Project Director
Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant

WTP:WA

Attachment

cc w/attach: BNI Correspondence