



Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

July 13, 2009

Mr. Mark R. Breor
Vice President and Project Manager
Parsons Infrastructure & Technology Group, Inc.
1080 Silver Bluff Road
Aiken, South Carolina 29803

Dear Mr. Breor:

The U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Office of Enforcement, within the Office of Health, Safety and Security, conducted an evaluation of the deficiencies associated with the January 24, 2009, fire event described in Noncompliance Tracking System (NTS) report NTS-SRSO--PSC-SWPF-2009-0001, *Form Wood Timber Fire*. The evaluation included a review of documents and discussions with you and members of your staff. Parsons Infrastructure & Technology Group, Inc. (Parsons) documents reviewed included the *Salt Waste Processing Facility (SWPF) Assessment #: MSA-09-02 Savannah River Site J-Area Construction Fire on January 24, 2009 Investigation Report, SWPF Plan of Action and Milestones Construction Fire on January 24, 2009, Form Wood Fire Cause Analysis Report, Integrated Corrective Action Plan for SWPF Construction Fire on January 24, 2009, SWPF 10 CFR 851 Worker Safety and Health Plan, SWPF Construction Health and Safety Plan, and SWPF Construction Safety Manual* implementing procedures and instructions.

The subject NTS report describes deficiencies in hazard identification, assessment, and control, as well as multiple failures to follow procedures that resulted in the fire. The fire occurred when one of six propane heaters was placed too close to wood forms for concrete, causing the wood to overheat and ignite. The heaters were being used inside a thermal tent that was erected to ensure proper curing of the concrete during a cold weather period. The failure to adequately identify and assess hazards associated with use of the heaters had the potential to expose workers to hazardous conditions, including a confined space, before the fire occurred. Subsequently, a superintendent's decision to fight a fire that had progressed beyond the incipient stage rather than promptly notify emergency responders exacerbated the impact of these deficiencies, further placing several workers at risk of serious injury.

Based on this evaluation, DOE concludes that violations of 10 C.F.R. Part 851, *Worker Safety and Health Program*, occurred in the planning and execution of the concrete placement work and ensuing fire. Further, the significance of the event and noncompliances is aggravated by the supervisory actions and involvement. Typically, DOE is more likely to initiate enforcement action for events that involve such aggravating factors.



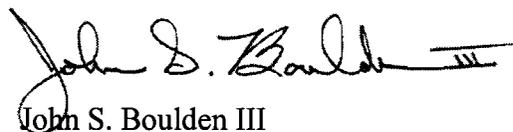
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However, despite significant breakdowns in the initial response to this event, DOE finds that your follow-on actions were swift, forthright, and comprehensive. In addition to immediately ceasing all active construction work pending management approval to restart, Parsons promptly submitted a detailed, comprehensive, and self-critical NTS report. This report acknowledged both the willful nature of the decision to fight the fire and the inaccurate information provided to the Savannah River Site Emergency Operations Center when the fire was ultimately reported. The NTS report has also been promptly updated to reflect the breadth and depth of Parsons' investigative and causal analysis efforts. The Office of Enforcement finds that your investigation into the fire effectively analyzed the event, and that the corrective actions are traceable to the causal analysis findings and judgments of need. In addition, the majority of corrective actions are already complete and the remaining actions, including effectiveness reviews, are scheduled to be completed in the near term. This includes an external assessment of the effectiveness of your efforts to evaluate and rectify human performance and latent organizational weaknesses.

In recognition of (1) Parsons' prompt, candid, and complete reporting of the event, deficiencies, and noncompliances, and (2) the extent and timeliness of your corrective actions, DOE has determined that further enforcement investigation is not warranted at this time. In conjunction with the Office of Environmental Management and the Savannah River Operations Office, we will continue to monitor completion of the corrective actions.

No response to this letter is required. Should you have any questions, please contact me at (301) 903-2178 or your staff may contact Kathy McCarty, Director, Office of Worker Safety and Health Enforcement, at (301) 903-0100.

Sincerely,



John S. Boulden III
Acting Director
Office of Enforcement
Office of Health, Safety and Security

cc: Mark Holowczak, Parsons
Richard Azzaro, DNFSB