

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

May 30, 1997

TO: G. W. Cunningham, Technical Director
FROM: P.F. Gubanc & D.G. Ogg, Hanford Site Representatives
SUBJECT: Activity Report for Week Ending May 30, 1997

Board staff members Ralph Arcaro and Mark Sautman were on site May 27-29 to review the status of plutonium stabilization activities at the Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP).

A. Plutonium Reclamation Facility (PRF) Explosion Recovery: Due to several cases of poor work planning and poor preparation, facility personnel and investigation team members were unable to enter Room 40 of PRF this week. Although the investigation team has given high priority to obtaining a sample from tank A109 and detailed photographs of the room, these activities have not been done. The investigation team, as well as outside agencies have raised a number of questions regarding the adequacy of the emergency response, medical response, and outside agency notification in the early hours after the explosion. DOE-RL has commissioned a second investigation team to look into these deficiencies thus allowing the original team to focus on the technical details of events that led up to the explosion.

B. Canister Storage Building (CSB) Construction: On May 23, 1997, Duke Engineering & Services Hanford (DESH) issued a letter to MOWAT, the CSB constructor, explaining the DESH expectations for resumption of construction. The letter lists nine corrective actions that should be taken by MOWAT to correct deficiencies identified by the investigation into the worker injury at the CSB construction site. As MOWAT completes these nine corrective actions, DESH intends to release portions of the construction in a phased approach. Concurrently, DOE-RL is finishing its investigation and expects to issue a draft report next week. DOE-RL did not issue a formal stop-work order of its own, but is closely monitoring the recovery efforts of Fluor Daniel Hanford, DESH and MOWAT.

C. Staff Review of 94-1 Activities at PFP: Mr. Ogg accompanied the Board staff in a review of plutonium stabilization activities at PFP. Plutonium solution stabilization using the vertical denitration calciner, originally scheduled to start in June 1997, will not start before October 1997 under the current facility planning. This "key" milestone from the 94-1 Implementation Plan is delayed due to both technical and budgetary reasons. The Board staff pointed out that formal notification of these facts has not been forthcoming, and DOE committed to drafting correspondence that will address this issue. Other observations from the review will be reported in the staff trip report.

cc:

Board Members