

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

May 26, 2000

MEMORANDUM FOR: J. K. Fortenberry, Technical Director

FROM: T. Dwyer and H. Waugh, Pantex Site Representatives

SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Activity Report for Week Ending May 26, 2000

DNFSB Activity Summary: T. Dwyer and H. Waugh were on site all week. A. Matteucci was on site all week observing the DOE-AL Packaging and Transportation Appraisal.

Authorization Basis Issues: This week, the EH-2 Authorization Basis Evaluation Team returned to conduct an initial factual accuracy review of their draft report and formally brief site contractor and DOE management on their findings. Based on their review, the Team has concluded that the legacy "issue" from the 1996 EH Evaluation, involving the lack of a fully developed Authorization Basis, remains open. However, they further concluded that progress is being made to address this issue, and both DOE and contractor management understand what needs to be done -- though such progress has been admittedly slow. A number of opportunities for improvement have been identified in 8 general categories; 2 specific examples may be dispositioned as "issues" in the final report, which should be released by June 30th.^[II.A]

W78 SS-21 Step 1 Program: DOE-AL, AAO, and the W78 Project Team met to discuss the path forward for the W78 program. In an attempt to meet scheduling requirements, consideration is being given to reducing the scope of the Step 1 effort, including elimination of assembly activities (i.e., focus on the D&I process, similar to recent efforts on the W76), and elimination of repair activities. Interestingly, the idea of scrapping the Step 1 effort altogether, and proceeding directly into the full SS-21 program was discussed, but discarded largely due to DOE-AL WPD concerns with retaining a viable program in the interim. At present, there are no drivers (e.g., a need for a high fidelity JTA unit) for this concern. This activity preceded receipt of the Board letter of May 23rd on this subject.^[II.A]

AL-R8 Sealed Insert (SI) Repackaging Line: Both of the AL-R8 SI Repackaging Lines' imaging station motor controllers have been replaced. However, minor equipment difficulties continue to slow throughput. Difficulty has also been experienced in pumping down a family of pits that was dismantled using a DMSO-based process. As a result, M&H was not able to demonstrate a packaging rate of 50 pits per week this week.^[II.A]

Packaging and Transportation Issues: Although there was some spill-over into the on-site arena, this week's DP/EM/DOE-AL Packaging & Transportation Appraisal was largely concerned with off-site shipments. For example, the control scheme being contemplated in the On-Site Transportation BIO Upgrade Program was considered outside the scope of this appraisal. The appraisal process appeared to be hindered by the fact that 3 separate reviewing organizations exist within the transportation world -- DP, EM, and EH. Though this effort was treated as a combined review [for the 1st time], coincidence-in-time was the only integrated factor. An issue from the last [1997] appraisal concerning a lack of annual management appraisals was found to remain open. Difficulties with tracking and closing open issues appears to be endemic to this process. The appraisal team noted that future appraisals will include greater focus on on-site transportation once the 461 family of DOE Orders/Manuals is issued.^[II.A]