

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

February 19, 1999

MEMORANDUM FOR: G. W. Cunningham, Technical Director

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

SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Activity Report for Week Ending February 19, 1999

DNFSB Activity Summary: H. Waugh and T. Dwyer were on site all week. D. Grover was on site all week observing the AL-R8 SI Qualification Evaluation (Phase IV). D. Owen and OE R. West were on site all week observing the resumption of the [suspended] W56 RA.

W56 Dismantlement Program Readiness Assessment (RA): The RA for the W56 was completed this week, and DOE-AL authorized startup of dismantlement operations. The RA had been started in December, but was suspended when it was determined that the safety basis and training and qualification functional areas were not ready. The RA team developed 2 pre-start findings: (1) the safety controls linking document (W56 Pantex Activity Controls Manual) was found to be flawed and not capable of supporting the change control process for the W56 safety basis, as required by the local safety basis management program; and (2) the USQ reviewers demonstrated a level of knowledge insufficient for adequate change control review. The RA team also developed 7 post-start findings. M&H instituted a compensatory measure requiring that the M&H person most knowledgeable of the W56 Authorization Basis review all proposed W56 Program changes, until the documentation and level of knowledge deficiencies are corrected. AAO further specified that this authority can not be delegated, and that the corrective actions must be completed by March 19th. Based on this action, the RA team leader considered all remaining open actions to be post-start items, and concurred with the M&H recommendation that W56 operations be authorized. Of note, the RA team accepted this compensatory measure for a significant pre-start finding in an atmosphere of hurried decision making not normally observed in a readiness review/corrective action process. DOE-AL authorized W56 operations through an Authorization Agreement. AAO is requiring that M&H develop approved corrective action plans for all of the post-start findings by March 19th. The first W56 was transported in to Zone 12 Friday morning, and work commenced with required LINAC operations, although subsequent LINAC limit switch problems precluded smooth advancement to actual dismantlement operations.

AL-R8 Sealed Insert (SI) Qualification Evaluation (QE): The Phase IV QE for the AL-R8 SI, originally scheduled for the week of February 1st, was held this week. The qualification team determined that additional testing is required to fully qualify this container. These tests include drop tests to qualify the use of a carbon steel pit holding fixture, and testing to determine if the AL-R8 SI flange bolts can adequately resist corrosion and thermal stresses. The QEs for the imaging and purge & backfill stations have also been delayed while technical problems are resolved. Due to these delays the repackaging program is anticipated to be delayed from its scheduled March 25th start-up date to the end of April at the earliest.