

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

November 6, 1998

MEMORANDUM FOR: G.W. Cunningham, Technical Director

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

SUBJECT: Pantex Plant Activity Report for Week Ending November 6, 1998

DNFSB Activity Summary: T. Dwyer was on site all week. H. Waugh was at DNFSB-HQ for training all week. M. Forsbacka and D. Owen were on site Wednesday and Thursday, and J. McConnell was on site Wednesday thru Friday, attending the W56 Milestone 3 (SMT) meeting.

W56 Dismantlement Program: The Standing Management Team (SMT) convened Wednesday-Thursday to conduct the W56 Dismantlement Program Milestone 3 Meeting. This was the first milestone meeting to be led by the SMT, which was charged with evaluating whether the W56 project had reached a state of readiness sufficient to proceed to the independent review phase (e.g., NESS, Readiness Assessment, etc.). Presentations to the SMT included several SS-21 focus areas -- hazard analyses and derived safety controls. The SMT chairman concluded that additional work is required to fully define the safety controls, but, overall, the project is ready to support the scheduled November 16th NESS start date. Schedules for the other reviews will be determined based on completion of the safety basis and resolution of other programmatic issues.

W79 Dismantlement Program: A 5-man NESS Group observed W79 operations this week to validate that the process approved by the W79 NESS was representative of the current W79 process. This is the 2nd time such a validation group has been constituted; the W69 received a similar revisit. A few items were identified that will require resolution, but the validation group appeared satisfied with the overall program. DOE-AL NESD will issue a summary memorandum.

W62 Disassembly and Inspection (D&I) Program: In a meeting concerning the path forward to upgrade the safety of the W62 D&I Program and resume operations, DOE-AL personnel presented a path forward that includes a NESS Revalidation as described in DOE-STD-3015-97. This directly contradicts the path forward described in Board Recommendation 98-2. However, at Thursday's SMT Meeting, it was decided that the W62 Project Team and Design Agency personnel should update the Weapons Safety Specification (WSS), complete a table-top HAR and ABCD, and then conduct a NESS review that includes evaluation of the original safety basis for D&I -- in other words, all the essential attributes of a Nuclear Explosive Safety Study.

Congressional Staff Visit: Mr. Kyle Ruckert, Legislative Assistant (Military Affairs) to Congressman Thornberry, visited Pantex on Tuesday for orientation. After a brief introduction, the Site Reps provided him with background documentation on the Board, as well as recent items of interest (1998 Annual Report, DNFSB/Tech-18, Recommendation 98-2 [cover letter only]).

Chiles Commission: The Chiles Commission [Commission on Maintaining U.S. Nuclear Weapons Expertise] conducted a series of telephone conferences with several groups of Pantex personnel on Friday. These calls represent additional data-gathering efforts, as the Commission visited the site previously, to conduct meetings with employees and retirees, on July 22nd and 23rd.