

# DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

August 29, 1997

TO: G.W. Cunningham, Technical Director  
FROM: P.F. Gubanc & D.G. Ogg, Hanford Site Representatives  
SUBJ: Activity Report for Week Ending August 29, 1997

Mr. Ogg was on active duty with the Naval reserve all week.

**A. Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP) Activities:**

1. Fissile Material Handling: Based on inquiries by this office and the Board, DOE-RL line management is reconsidering its plan to assess the contractor's readiness to resume fissile material handling at PFP. A presentation to the Site Manager and a final decision are now expected on September 3rd. We will inform the Board of DOE's decision when available.
2. Plutonium Reclamation Facility (PRF): BWHC has completed their A "comprehensive risk assessment" and will present the results to DOE-RL on August 29. If deemed acceptable, this assessment should permit respiratory protection in PRF to be relaxed within several days.

**B. Spent Nuclear Fuel (SNF) Project:**

1. Canister Storage Building (CSB) Erection: Duke Engineering (DESH) has determined that the proposed installation of the MCO Handling Machine (MHM) box beams into the CSB is too risky a rigging evolution. DESH therefore intends to delay completion of the CSB structure by several weeks to permit loading the beams in through an open endwall. DESH asserts that this change will improve safety, reduce cost and not impact the overall schedule.
2. CSB Structural Welds: The CSB structural steel fabricator identified an alternate weld size acceptance criteria to argue that many of his Aundersized@ welds are acceptable. If DESH agrees, the weld repair rate may drop from an estimated 80% currently to under 20%.
3. Schedule Assessment: DOE-RL's ARed Team@ continues its review of the SNF schedule risk assessment presented to the Board on August 19. DOE-RL's goal is complete its review by the end of next week so its findings will be available to discuss with the DNFSB Staff during their visit the week of September 8.

- C. Visit by Secretary Peña: Energy Secretary Peña, Senator Murray (D-WA) and Congressman Hastings (R-WA) visited Hanford August 27-28. Several facilities were toured, including specific attention to PFP and the May 14 explosion. The Secretary announced several DOE-wide initiatives as lessons-learned from the explosion; they are essentially reaffirmations of sound emergency planning. (Copies of his memos have been faxed back to DNFSB-HQ.) In addressing DOE employees, the Secretary stressed the following four points: 1) DOE's highest priority is safety; 2) Meet commitments to outside regulators and stakeholders; 3) DOE must be a Agood neighbor@ in host communities; and, 4) Important to celebrate successes and demonstrate progress.

cc: Board Members