

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

June 13, 1997

TO: G. W. Cunningham, Technical Director
FROM: P.F. Gubanc & D.G. Ogg, Hanford Site Representatives
SUBJECT: Activity Report for Week Ending June 13, 1997

Mr. Ogg was on leave Tuesday through Friday.

A. Plutonium Reclamation Facility (PRF) Explosion Recovery: The joint DOE/contractor investigation team now expects to issue its draft report on June 18. On June 10, Mr. Gubanc attended a B&W Hanford Company (BWHC) presentation to Fluor Daniel Hanford (FDH) and DOE-RL of their PRF recovery plan. Observations include:

1. BWHC has not yet defined the end state which the recovery plan is attempting to achieve.
2. BWHC could not crisply define how the recovery plan and actions were being managed to assure positive facility configuration and work control. (DOE-RL cited several recent instances where work was not performed as planned or was performed incorrectly.)
3. Neither BWHC nor FDH have drawn upon their corporate talent to assist in the recovery. (A B&W corporate person is currently involved with the explosion investigation.)
4. DOE-RL is the primary identifier of performance issues and motive force for demanding improvement. FDH actions in this regard, if any, are not readily apparent.

In response, DOE-RL issued a strongly-worded letter to FDH on June 11 which requested immediate action to remediate this situation. The DOE-RL letter is well supported by specific examples and is a justifiable response to BWHC's declining performance to date. Mr. Gubanc has also discussed this matter at length with DOE-RL and FDH senior management.

B. DOE-RL Facility Representatives (FR): DOE-RL currently has 18 qualified FRs. DOE-RL's staffing analysis identifies the need for 29. To attract and motivate the necessary talent, DOE-RL has, in the past, offered candidates a promotion to GS-14 upon qualification. On June 2, DOE-RL posted 11 FR vacancy announcements; 10 at the GS-13 level. We have three concerns:

1. DOE-RL is offering no alternative incentives (e.g., bonuses, premium pay) to entice GS-13 candidates to apply and qualify.
2. Due to the DOE hiring freeze, the postings are internal to DOE. The last round of GS-14 FR postings nearly exhausted the available pool of highly qualified candidates.
3. Given 1. & 2. above, pressure will exist to lower the standards to fill the billets.

On June 12, Gubanc discussed these concerns with DOE-RL (Hansen) who acknowledged their validity but insisted standards will not be lowered. We will continue to watch this closely.

C. Canister Storage Building (CSB): CSB rebar placement and structural steel construction activities have resumed. The next major concrete placement is planned for June 25.

cc:

Board Members