

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

June 11, 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 June 11, 1999

DNFSB Activity Summary: T. Dwyer and H. Waugh were on site all week.

Design Agency Responsibilities: In an effort to ensure the continued viability of both nuclear Design Agencies, a load-leveling agreement [the “Mega Strategy”] was negotiated at the last All-Manager Meeting. One part of this agreement includes the transfer of responsibility for all aspects of the W80 Weapons System from LANL to LLNL. Of note, the latest round of Senate FY00 budget mark-ups [S.R. 106-50] includes \$5M to effect this transfer. After considering the effects of this package deal, the LANL Weapons Program Director, L. Salazar, has stepped down. While there has been considerable consternation at SNL-NM, no management changes have occurred to date. In light of this agreement, it is not clear how all of the weapon-specific expertise that exists at LANL and SNL-NM will be successfully transferred to LLNL and SNL-CA.^[II.C]

AL-R8 Sealed Insert (SI): The AL-R8 SI Management Self Assessment (MSA) concluded today. Overall, a significant number of issues were raised, but none of them were considered show stoppers, and most were readily addressed. However, several authorization basis (AB) issues that were known problems at the start of the MSA remain unresolved: the necessary site BIO change and the AL-R8 SI Container On-Site Approval document have not yet been approved by AAO. [Interestingly, neither of these AB issues is identified as an exception in the M&H declaration of readiness to proceed with the MSA.] Additionally, one of the training issues will take a finite amount of time to address, because it involves specific training to be given to M&H Material Handlers as a result of a redistribution of labor mediated by the Metal Trades Council (MTC). Given the time necessary to correct these issues, the contractor Readiness Assessment has been delayed -- at the earliest, it is now expected to begin next Thursday. The readiness review question raised in the May 28th Pantex Site Representative letter has been partially resolved. AAO has verbally agreed that a “shadowing” review will not be conducted prior to AL-R8 SI start-up. However, AAO is still trying to resolve an internal disagreement as to whether AAO will [1] retain start-up authority and conduct a DOE Readiness Assessment, or [2] delegate full start-up authority to the contractor, negating the need for a DOE Readiness Assessment. At issue is recent M&H performance in the readiness review arena.^[II.B.2.b]

W56 Dismantlement Program: Last week’s report indicated that LLNL and SNL had provided M&H with a position paper concerning possible thermal reactions during torquing operations, concluding that the situation identified at Y-12 is not applicable at Pantex. This week, after reviewing the position paper, AAO informed M&H that the issue remained open. AAO also directed M&H to reopen Occurrence Report ALO-AO-MHSM-PANTEX-1999-0037. Torquing operations remain suspended.^[II.B.2.a]

Contractor Changes: M&H announced late last Friday that all stockholder and SEC approvals had been obtained, and the merger with Day & Zimmermann (D&Z) was finalized.^[II.B]