

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

TO: G. W. Cunningham, Technical Director
FROM: P.F. Gubanc & D.G. Ogg, Hanford Site Representatives
SUBJECT: Activity Report for Week Ending June 6, 1997

Board members Eggenberger, DiNunno and Kouts, accompanied by staff members Ralph Arcaro and Don Wille were on site June 4-5 to review Hanford activities of Board interest.

A. Plutonium Reclamation Facility (PRF) Explosion Recovery: The investigation team, lead by Ron Gerton, has completed most of its planned field work, but continues with additional research and drafting its report. The team continues to learn of past experiences within the Department of Energy and from the Army regarding the explosiveness of combinations of hydroxylamine nitrate (and hydroxylamine sulfate) and nitric acid. Additionally, Gerald Pollet, executive director of Heart of America Northwest, a local Hanford watchdog group, issued a letter to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the DOE and the DNFSB on June 5, 1997, requesting that the EPA and OSHA conduct an independent investigation into the explosion "with appropriate additional expertise sought from the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board and the States of Washington and Oregon."

B. Canister Storage Building (CSB) Construction Resumption: Mowat, the CSB constructor, began limited construction activities at the CSB this week. As Mowat corrects additional deficiencies identified by the CSB accident investigation team, further construction activity will be approved by Duke and Fluor Daniel Hanford.

C. Construction and Configuration Management: The following actions were recently taken by Fluor Daniel Hanford (FDH) and DOE-RL.

1. Independent Inspection: Since November 1996, DOE-RL has been in discussion with FDH and Fluor Daniel Northwest (FDNW) regarding the independence of FDNW Assurance Inspectors (A/I). On June 2, 1997, FDH recommended that the A/I function be reassigned from FDNW to the FDH. DOE-RL approved the proposal on June 4, 1997.

2. Work Completion Process: On November 7, 1996, DOE-RL requested FDH to review and take corrective action on the FDH work completion process (including configuration management). FDH issued its final response on May 8, 1997 (just before the staff's May 12-15 review). On June 3, 1997, DOE-RL responded with its comments and requested a revised FDH plan by June 24, 1997.

The site representative office finds that, while these actions were appropriate, the motivation for and timing of the actions are questionable.

cc:

Board Members