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DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

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99-0001550



May 27, 1999

Mr. James M. Owendoff
Acting Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management
Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20585-0113

Dear Mr. Owendoff:

The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board's (Board) letter of January 28, 1999, conditionally accepted Revision 1 to the Department of Energy's (DOE) Implementation Plan for Recommendation 94-1, *Remediation of Nuclear Materials in the Defense Nuclear Facility Complex*. In our letter, we requested that DOE address several deficiencies regarding the plan for materials stabilization activities at the Savannah River Site (SRS). We requested that DOE provide a report on the impact of delays in construction of the Actinide Packaging and Storage Facility (APSF), develop a contingency plan for stabilization of highly-enriched uranium solutions, and provide detailed plans and schedules for the processing of classified parts to be shipped from the Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site for stabilization at SRS.

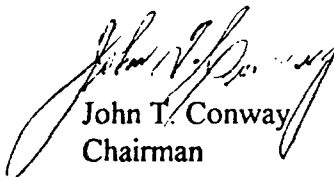
The Board received a letter dated March 26, 1999, from Mr. David Huizenga, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Nuclear Material and Facility Stabilization, that provides an interim response to our letter of January 28, 1999. Mr. Huizenga's letter documents a contingency plan for stabilizing the highly-enriched uranium solutions at SRS and outlines the approach for stabilizing the classified parts from Rocky Flats. However, the letter states that the preferred methods and facilities for stabilizing the classified parts will not be known until the summer of 1999, and defers a response regarding APSF until the end of June to wait for the results of a systems engineering evaluation of plutonium material management and new storage facilities at SRS.

The Board acknowledges the contingency plan for highly-enriched uranium solutions, but notes that a timely decision needs to be made regarding implementation of this contingency to avoid prolonged storage of solutions in process facilities at SRS as well as potential delays in canyon operations that could result from the limited available storage capacity. The Board communicated its position on APSF issues to the Secretary of Energy in a letter dated May 14, 1999. The Board expects the June 1999 response from DOE to fully address plans to

stabilize and package plutonium to meet DOE-STD-3013, *Criteria for Preparing and Packaging Plutonium Metals and Oxides for Long-Term Storage*, as well as plans to stabilize the neptunium solutions impacted by the delay of APSF. The Board plans to hold a public meeting to further discuss Recommendation 94-1 stabilization activities subsequent to receiving that report.

If you have comments or questions on this matter, please feel free to call me.

Sincerely,



John T. Conway
Chairman

c: Mr. Mark B. Whitaker, Jr.