

A.J. Eggenberger, Chairman
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DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

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September 1, 2005

The Honorable Linton Brooks
 Administrator
 National Nuclear Security Administration
 U.S. Department of Energy
 1000 Independence Avenue, SW
 Washington, DC 20585-0701

Dear Ambassador Brooks:

On May 31, 2005, the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (Board) issued a letter noting that the passive confinement approach credited by the safety basis for the Plutonium Facility at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) is inadequate as a safety control. The letter requested that the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) provide to the Board within 60 days a report outlining NNSA's plan and schedule for implementing an effective safety-class system that would protect the public from the unmitigated consequences of a potential event at the Plutonium Facility. In a letter dated July 21, 2005, NNSA requested a 60-day extension to prepare an adequate response.

The Board is aware of the preliminary analysis that has been performed by LANL and agrees with NNSA that this analysis must be significantly modified to be responsive to the Board's request. The Board is also aware that the Core Team preparing the Implementation Plan for the Board's Recommendation 2004-2, *Active Confinement Systems*, is developing the necessary guidance for preparation of such an analysis and is considering using LANL's Plutonium Facility as a pilot facility for implementation of this guidance. The Core Team's general approach appears reasonable. As such, the Board grants NNSA such additional time as is necessary to apply the guidance being developed by the team to LANL's Plutonium Facility, consistent with the schedule proposed in the draft Implementation Plan for Recommendation 2004-2.

The Board's staff is available to participate with the Recommendation 2004-2 Core Team in reviewing the path forward for LANL's Plutonium Facility.

Sincerely,

A. J. Eggenberger
 Chairman

c: Mr. Thomas P. D'Agostino
 Mr. Edwin L. Wilmot
 Mr. Mark B. Whitaker, Jr.