



The Secretary of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

January 31, 2005

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JRF - SAFETY BOARD

The Honorable John T. Conway
Chairman
Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board
625 Indiana Avenue, NW, Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Mr. Chairman:

On December 7, 2004, the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (Board) issued Recommendation 2004-2, *Active Confinement Systems*. In accordance with 42 U.S.C. § 2286d (b)(1), the Department of Energy requests an additional 45 days to respond to this recommendation. If the extension is granted, a response will be provided no later than March 17, 2005.

In the interim, the Department will review the concerns raised by Recommendation 2004-2 and, in particular, passive ventilation confinement systems in ongoing designs and existing facilities where they are currently permitted and approved. This review will result in a better understanding of hazard analysis processes and the Board's concerns regarding them. The additional time will assist the Department in determining what types of facilities would benefit most from an active confinement ventilation system and those types of facilities or operating considerations that may not warrant such a system as suggested in your recommendation. Finally, this review can add insights into how the Department's existing requirements, guidance, and standards are interpreted and applied, and whether supplemental guidance is needed to enhance safety.

We will continue to work closely with the Board and its staff throughout this process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Spencer Abraham".

Spencer Abraham

