

**Department of Energy**

Washington, DC 20585

April 14, 2003

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DNE SAFETY BOARD

The Honorable John T. Conway
Chairman
Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board
625 Indiana Avenue, NW, Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20004-2091

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This letter is to inform you of progress in beginning disposition of highly enriched uranium (HEU) solutions at the Savannah River Site (SRS). There are four milestones in Revision 3 of the Implementation Plan for the Remediation of Nuclear Materials in the Defense Nuclear Facilities Complex that is related to the disposition of HEU. The first two milestones, IP 221 and 222, have been completed. However, milestone 224, "Begin disposition of pre-existing enriched uranium solution and enriched uranium solution from Mk 16/22 SNF dissolution," due on March 31, 2003, has been delayed.

At the SRS, improvements to several key facilities have been completed to permit blending of HEU to low enriched uranium (LEU) using natural uranium and for specification confirmation. Readiness is confirmed and the first batch of LEU has been produced. The sampling process has confirmed that the solution meets end-user, the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), specifications. The SRS is prepared to begin loading and shipping operations when directed. Construction delays by the TVA construction contractor have caused completion delays beyond the forecast March 31, 2003, readiness date and licensing delays by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). This has resulted in a delay in the readiness of the TVA facility to receive shipments. Such delays are beyond Department of Energy control and may delay start of shipments until mid-May 2003. The Department will inform the Board if these delays will continue beyond May 31, 2003.

No impacts on the completion of milestone IP 225, "Complete disposition of enriched uranium solution resulting from MK 16/22 SNF dissolution," due September 2005 are forecast.



If you have any questions, please call me at (202) 586-7709 or Mr. Paul Golan, Chief Operating Officer, at (202) 586-0738.

Sincerely


Jessie Hill Roberson
Assistant Secretary for
Environmental Management

cc: Mark Whitaker, S-3.1
Jeffrey M. Allison, SR