



The Secretary of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

August 31, 1994

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

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This letter responds to your Recommendation 94-1, Improved Schedule for Remediation in the Defense Nuclear Complex, of May 26, 1994. The Department shares the concerns outlined in your letter, and we agree that there is a need to take timely action to place the substances formerly used in the manufacture of nuclear weapons into a state suitable for safe interim storage. There are significant activities underway, such as the Plutonium Vulnerability Study and the associated Management Plan to address many of the hazards cited in your Recommendation.

Your Recommendation calls for an integrated program plan to be formulated on a high priority basis to convert, within two to three years, the specific materials cited in the Recommendation to forms or conditions suitable for safe interim storage. The Department commits to develop a plan that will include the following initiatives:

a systems engineering approach to maximize the integration of facilities and capabilities while minimizing worker exposures and additional waste;

research programs required to fill any gaps in the technological information base;

identification of those facilities that may be needed for future handling and treatment of these materials;

ensuring operational readiness in accordance with DOE Order 5480.31.

This integrated program plan will develop detailed schedules for specific activities cited in the Recommendation and will include critical path activities, decision points, and resource considerations necessary for successful program

initiation and completions. The plan will be utilized as a tool to assist in determining the appropriate course of action to expeditiously convert the material discussed in specific recommendations 3 through 7 to a form or condition more suitable for interim storage.

The Department accepts Recommendation 94-1 conditioned upon the understanding that complete conversion of all materials cited in your Recommendation may not be accomplished within the time periods described in the Recommendation. We look forward to working closely with you and your staff to develop a responsive Implementation Plan and activity schedules that meet our common goals. The Implementation Plan will be forwarded to you in accordance with 42 U.S.C. § 2286d.

If you have further questions, please contact me, or have a member of your staff contact Mr. Thomas Grumbly, Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management, at (202) 586-7710.

Sincerely,



Hazel R. O'Leary