

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

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May 27, 2010

The Honorable Inés R. Triay
Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585-0113

Dear Dr. Triay:

The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (Board) received your letter dated March 19, 2010, regarding Revision 5 of the Department of Energy's (DOE) Implementation Plan for the Board's Recommendation 2001-1, *High-Level Waste Management at the Savannah River Site*. The Board notes continuing uncertainty in the Tank 48 Treatment Project, and insufficient maturity to support firm schedule commitments. Given this uncertainty, the Board accepts Revision 5 of the Implementation Plan only as an interim plan until DOE can produce a more complete Implementation Plan.

The Board understands that DOE expects the contractor to provide better definition and a better schedule for the Tank 48 project later this year. The Board also understands that Tank 50 may play a more prominent role in support of high-level waste management at SRS. Given these developments and changes in the working schedule for the Salt Waste Processing Facility, the Board expects that DOE will need to develop a revised Implementation Plan. The revised plan may include commitments for Tank 50 and should include explicit commitments with clearly defined deliverables and milestone dates.

The Board remains concerned about the impacts at the tank farms from delays at the Tank 48 project and the Salt Waste Processing Facility. Relative to Revision 4 of the Implementation Plan for Recommendation 2001-1, DOE's proposed milestones reflect delays in these projects as long as 5 years and 4 years, respectively. The Board continues to urge DOE to pursue additional measures to mitigate the impacts at the tank farms, and apply additional resources to the tank farms where possible.

The Board agrees with your proposal for continued, close interaction at the staff level as DOE proceeds with the design of the Tank 48 project, recovery of Tank 50, and construction of the Salt Waste Processing Facility. The Board requests that DOE submit a new revised Implementation Plan for Recommendation 2001-1 by November 2010. As noted above, the Board expects that the Implementation Plan will include explicit commitments with clearly

defined deliverables and milestone dates. The Board also suggests that you provide at least one commitment per year for each project, as less frequent commitments are typically insufficient to allow adequate monitoring of progress.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter S. Winokur". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Peter" being the most prominent.

Peter S. Winokur, Ph.D.
Chairman

c: Mr. Jack R. Craig
Mrs. Mari-Jo Campognone