



Department of Energy
National Nuclear Security Administration
Washington, DC 20585

March 18, 2004

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

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Enclosed is the Los Alamos Site Office (LASO) response to the concerns raised in your August 19, 2003, and November 5, 2003, letters related to the lightning protection system at the Weapons Engineering Tritium Facility (WETF) and the safety classification of the electrical distribution system at the Chemistry and Metallurgy Research facility (CMR). The enclosed response includes the National Nuclear Security Administration's (NNSA) approach and LASO directive to the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) concerning the safety issues at these facilities.

In summary, LASO has directed LANL to conduct a thorough review of the electrical distribution system at CMR as part of the basis for interim operations upgrade for the facility by April 30, 2004. With regard to WETF, several safety measures are being pursued as outlined in the enclosed LASO response, including upgrade of the fire barriers around the storage room, aggressive packaging of the material-at-risk in approved containers, as well as re-evaluation of hazard analysis and accident analysis scenarios in the update to the WETF documented safety analysis.

We will continue to track progress on these items and will provide periodic updates to your staff. If you have any questions, please contact me or have your staff contact Sujita Pierpoint at (301) 903-9601 or Gerald Schlapper at (505) 665-7111.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Everet H. Beckner".

Everet H. Beckner
Deputy Administrator
for Defense Programs

Enclosure

cc w/enclosures:
M. Whitaker, DR-1
R. Erickson, LASO



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