

A J Eggenberger, Chairman
John E Mansfield, Vice Chairman
Joseph F Bader
Larry W Brown
Peter S Winokur

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

625 Indiana Avenue, NW, Suite 700 Washington, D C 20004-2901
(202) 694-7000



March 5, 2008

The Honorable Robert L. Smolen
Deputy Administrator for Defense Programs
National Nuclear Security Administration
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585-0104

Dear Mr. Smolen:

The staff of the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (Board) recently reviewed the preliminary design and safety basis for the replacement Radioactive Liquid Waste Treatment Facility (RLWTF) at Los Alamos National Laboratory. Several significant safety issues were identified in the areas of project management, the design process, and development of the safety basis, as detailed in the enclosed report. Two items of particular concern include:

- Integration of the safety and design processes is weak; this has been the subject of three Board public hearings since 2005.
- Federal oversight of the project through the Integrated Project Team is weak and needs to be strengthened.

Given the necessary role that RLWTF will play in supporting future missions at the laboratory, the Board believes it critical that these safety issues be addressed and resolved before the preliminary design is completed. Several of the issues discussed in the enclosed report also have implications for other design and construction projects at the laboratory and hence warrant greater attention.

Therefore, pursuant to 42 U.S.C.2286b(d), the Board requests that the National Nuclear Security Administration submit a report and provide a briefing within 60 days of receipt of this letter describing (1) the root causes of each of the safety issues identified in the enclosed report,

2) actions planned to resolve the issues specific to the RLWTF project, and (3) actions planned to incorporate lessons learned from the RLWTF project into other design and construction projects at the laboratory.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. J. Eggenberger". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "A".

A. J. Eggenberger
Chairman

c: Mr. Mark B. Whitaker, Jr.

Enclosure