



The Secretary of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

June 29, 1995

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

Dear Mr. Conway:

On May 5, 1995, you provided Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board Recommendation 95-1 concerning improved safety of cylinders containing depleted uranium. Before receiving your recommendation, we were reviewing actions to be taken with respect to the safe storage of the inventory of depleted uranium hexafluoride. This material is stored at Portsmouth, Ohio; Paducah, Kentucky; and Oak Ridge, Tennessee.

The elements of your recommendation that relate to renewing the protective coating of the depleted uranium hexafluoride cylinders and the exploration of additional measures to protect and handle these cylinders represent one part of the actions necessary for the program. The Department will focus on the following activities:

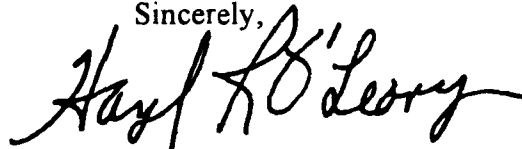
- relocating cylinders from contact with the ground and keeping all cylinders from further ground contact;
- relocating all cylinders into adequate inspection configuration, and maintaining them as such;
- repainting cylinders as needed to avoid excessive corrosion;
- updating handling and inspection procedures and site-specific Safety Analysis Reports; and
- completion of an ongoing study that will include an analysis of alternative chemical forms for the material.

With respect to the last item, the Department began the long-term strategy selection process in November 1994. This process includes engineering and cost analyses of various alternatives and appropriate documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act. As part of this effort, safety analyses of alternative chemical forms will be performed.

We have identified a plan for the cylinders containing the depleted uranium hexafluoride that will protect public health and safety and lead to an environmentally sound long-term strategy for managing the material. We also have a good understanding of the cost of this program. We accept Recommendation 95-1.

Mr. Ray Hunter, Deputy Director of the Office of Nuclear Energy, Science and Technology, is the responsible senior manager for the preparation of the implementation plan. He can be reached at (202) 586-2240.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Hazel R. O'Leary". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "H".

Hazel R. O'Leary