



Department of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

OCT 02 2006

The Honorable A. J. Eggenberger
Chairman
Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board
625 Indiana Avenue, NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20004-2941

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The purpose of this letter is to notify the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DNFSB) that Commitment 119E in the Implementation Plan (IP) for Recommendation 2000-1, *Prioritization for Stabilizing Nuclear Materials*, is at risk. The IP commitment calls for completion of bulk sludge containerization at K East Basin by October 31, 2006. A U.S. Department of Energy, Richland Operations Office (RL) K Basins Closure (KBC) Project Integrated Project Team analysis shows there is a risk that the commitment date of October 31, 2006, may be missed based upon the past six weeks vacuuming performance at the K East Basin. Slower than predicted vacuuming is due to higher than expected volume of small debris causing frequent plugging of end effectors, hoses, and strainers. At the projected rate of containerization, the best case forecast for completing the K East bulk sludge is October 17, 2006. The most likely finish is early November 2006, with a worse case finish of early December 2006.

This letter is to provide early notification of a potential to miss the commitment and assurance that management focus and attention are being applied. Environmental Management (EM), both RL and U.S. Department of Energy, Headquarter (HQ), have met with the contractor senior management and are assured that sufficient resources are being made available to meet the 119E Commitment. HQ will continue to keep your staff apprised of progress in the K East Basin bulk sludge containerization, including both negative and positive trends for meeting this commitment. RL and the contractor are aligned and committed to continue to execute the work safely and with high quality to ensure all fuel pieces are discovered during bulk sludge containerization. Neither safety nor quality will be sacrificed for schedule acceleration.

If you have any comments or feedback, please call me on (202) 586-0738, or Mr. Dae Y. Chung, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Safety Management and Operations, on (202) 586-5151.

Sincerely,

Dr. Inés R. Triay
Chief Operating Officer for
Environmental Management



cc: K. A. Klein, RL
M. B. Whitaker, DR-1