



Department of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

June 20, 2000

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DNF SAFETY BOARD

The Honorable John T. Conway
Chairman
Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board
625 Indiana Avenue, NW, Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20004-2901

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The purpose of this letter is to advise the Board of a schedule delay of approximately one year for inspection and repackaging program (IRP) activities involving the uranium-233 (^{233}U) inventory in Building 3019 at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory. These activities are a part of the Department's *Program Execution Plan for the ^{233}U Safe Storage System* (PEP), which we provided to you in July 1999 as a deliverable under our implementation plan for Recommendation 97-1.

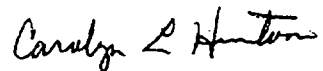
A peer review of Building 3019 activities conducted last December by the Department, with input from the Board's staff, identified several weaknesses in operational and managerial controls relating to IRP activities. As a result of this review, the Oak Ridge contractor, UT-Battelle, has proposed a comprehensive program management plan for Phase I of the IRP that now schedules an Operational Readiness Review (ORR) for early summer 2001 and first article inspection near August of that same year. In addition, the contractor has subcontracted with BWXT to assist in operation and management of IRP activities.

The extended schedule will enhance worker safety in the conduct of the inspections through additional preoperational testing of material handling equipment and an updated authorization basis for the facility. Ongoing surveillance activities provide assurance that materials in storage are safely contained pending the start of inspections.

The Department is currently reviewing the contractor's proposed plan. It is my understanding that the Board staff has been provided copies of the contractor's proposed plan and that a briefing for the Board by Department representatives concerning details of the plan was held May 25, 2000.

If there are any questions, please contact Mr. David Huizenga, the Responsible Manager for Recommendation 97-1, at (202) 586-5151 or visit our home page at www.em.doe.gov.

Sincerely,



Carolyn L. Huntoon
Assistant Secretary for
Environmental Management

cc:

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G. C. Manthey, ORO
