



**The Secretary of Energy**  
Washington, DC 20585

April 25, 1997

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

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This letter acknowledges receipt of your Recommendation 97-1 issued on March 3, 1997, concerning the safe storage of uranium-233 material. As you noted in your recommendation, the Department has recently completed a safety review of issues associated with highly enriched uranium. The Department's Highly Enriched Uranium Vulnerability Study identifies many of the concerns expressed in your recommendation. A management plan to address the issues in the Highly Enriched Uranium Vulnerability Study is currently being developed under the leadership of Defense Programs.

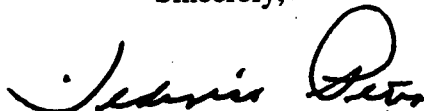
The Department accepts Recommendation 97-1. The process of assigning organizational responsibility for this effort will require further review. I am reserving our response to this issue until I have the opportunity to review the results of ongoing Department studies related to this matter.

The Department will use a systems engineering approach to manage the implementation of this recommendation. Needed actions identified as a result of a systems engineering study will be incorporated into the Department's budget formulation process and will be worked in conjunction with other related activities in progress. These activities include applicable elements of the Department's 94-1 Implementation Plan, the Environmental Management ten-year planning process, and the Highly Enriched Uranium Vulnerability Management Plan, currently under development.

It is the Department's understanding that spent nuclear fuel containing uranium-233 is not within the scope of Recommendation 97-1. In addition, I understand that uranium-233 safety concerns related to the Molten Salt Reactor Experiment at Oak Ridge are being addressed in the Recommendation 94-1 Implementation Plan on improving schedules for remediation and stabilization of nuclear materials.

Mr. Robert Stallman, Deputy Assistant Manager for Facility Operations, Idaho Operations Office, is the responsible manager for the preparation of the Implementation Plan. He will work with you and your staff to develop an acceptable Implementation Plan meeting our mutual expectations. He can be reached at (208) 526-1995.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Federico F. Peña". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'F'.

Federico F. Peña