

**[DOE LETTERHEAD]**

December 9, 1993

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

Dear Mr. Chairman:

On August 31, 1993, the Department of Energy accepted Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board Recommendation 93-5 regarding the waste characterization program for high-level nuclear waste storage tanks at the Hanford Site. The Department's Implementation Plan addressing the issues of Recommendation 93-5 is due to the Board on December 9, 1993.

To improve the management of the Hanford waste tanks, the Department recently reorganized the Tank Waste Remediation System characterization program. A new program manager was appointed by the management and operating contractor on November 1, 1993. This individual was selected based on her waste tank management expertise. Subsequently, an overall assessment of the characterization program, including the issues described in Recommendation 93-5, has been initiated.

In accordance with section 315 (e) of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 (42 U.S.C. 2286d(e)), the Department will require a 45-day extension for submitting the Recommendation 93-5 Implementation Plan. This extension is necessary to ensure development of an integrated and effective approach to all of the waste tank characterization issues. The Implementation Plan will be delivered to the Board no later than January 21, 1994.

Sincerely,

*Hazel R. O'Leary*