

The Secretary of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

May 24, 1993

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:

This responds to your April 23, 1993, letter rejecting the Department of Energy Implementation Plan for the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board Recommendation 92-4, "Multi-Function Waste Tank Facility Project at the Hanford Site." We share the Board's concerns and plan to make fundamental changes in our project management for the Tank Waste Remediation System program.

Our Richland office will authorize the current management and operating contractor, Westinghouse Hanford Company, to explicitly provide technical direction and integration of existing design and construction contracts for the Tank Waste Remediation System. This will be accomplished June 1, 1993, through formal delegations of technical authority and, later, by mutual agreement through the negotiated reassignment of such contracts to the Westinghouse Hanford Company. Award of new contracts for the design and construction of Tank Waste Remediation System facilities will be the responsibility of the management and operating contractor.

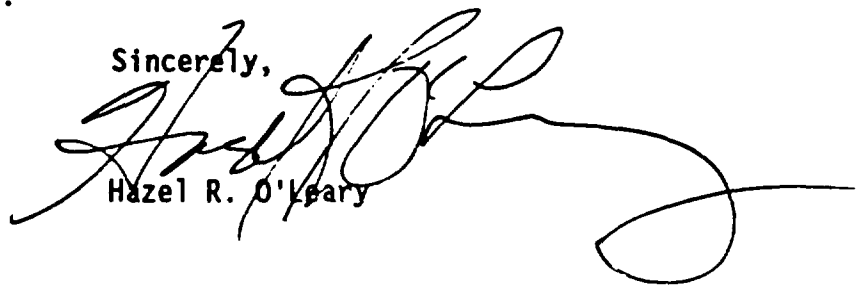
We will work with Westinghouse Hanford Company to ensure they have the requisite technical, project management, and contract administration personnel to perform this added responsibility. In parallel, the new Assistant Secretary for Environmental Restoration and Waste Management will evaluate options to improve staff capabilities at our Richland office.

Several contractual issues must still be decided. The current Westinghouse Hanford Company contract expires October 1, 1994, but contains a one-year option to 1995, so a decision will be needed whether to execute the option. Subsequently, an extend-or-compete decision will be needed for the succeeding five-year period. The Hanford architect-engineer and construction management contract has been awarded for a 30-month period, but the effective date has not been determined, pending a General Accounting Office decision on a protest of the award.

Due to the actions described above, we are unable to submit a revised Implementation Plan within 30 days, as requested. We appreciate your agreement to extend the deadline for submitting our revised plan to July 23, 1993.

Staff interactions have been very helpful in revising our response to this recommendation, and we appreciate the Board's offer of continuing interactions.

Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hazel R. O'Leary', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Hazel R. O'Leary