



The Secretary of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

October 28, 1994

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:

Thank you for your letter of September 8, 1994, forwarding Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board Recommendation 94-2, concerning Conformance with Safety Standards at Department of Energy (DOE) Low-Level Nuclear Waste and Disposal Sites. Recommendation 94-2 is accepted by the Department.

The Department will undertake a complex-wide baseline assessment of DOE low-level radioactive waste disposal requirements and practices with the objective of identifying problems affecting worker and public safety. In addition, the Implementation Plan for Recommendation 94-2 will address such issues as forecasting future disposal needs, including waste from decontamination and decommissioning and environmental restoration activities; the need for additional requirements, standards, or guidance on low-level radioactive waste management; the scope of planned studies for improving modeling and predictive capability of low-level radioactive waste impacts; an assessment of studies for enhancing stability of waste forms, deterring intrusion, and inhibiting radionuclide migration; and studies of enhanced volume reduction methods. The Implementation Plan will also address an assessment of the safety merits and demerits of privatization of facilities for low-level radioactive waste disposal for exclusive use by DOE.

The Department is taking steps to accelerate the completion of performance assessments for all active low-level radioactive waste burial sites as required by DOE Order 5820.2A. The Department recognizes the importance of assessing the potential cumulative impacts to the public health and safety and the environment of all low-level radioactive waste facilities on a site, including waste disposed prior to 1988. We will address these issues in the Implementation Plan for this recommendation.

We look forward to working closely with you and your staff to develop a responsive Implementation Plan. The Implementation Plan will be forwarded to you in accordance with 42 U.S.C. § 2286d. If you have further questions, please contact me or Mr. Thomas Grumbly, Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management at (202) 586-7710.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Hazel R. O'Leary". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Hazel R. O'Leary