

[SOE LETTERHEAD]

October 7, 1996

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 is in response to your August 20, 1996, letter regarding the Board's conditional acceptance of the Department's revised Implementation Plan (April 1996) for Recommendation 94-2, "Conformance with Safety Standards at Department of Energy Low-Level Nuclear Waste and Disposal Sites."

The Department intends to continue its aggressive management of Recommendation 94-2 to ensure successful and timely completion. In consistent with the Board's first condition, the Department intends to retain the commitment from the March 31, 1995, Implementation Plan to diversify the performance assessment peer review panel. We will strengthen the recusal process and evaluate ways to diversify the panel as part of the deliverable VI.B.7, "Improve Radiological Assessment and Review Process," scheduled for completion by February 28, 1997.

In response to the Board's second condition, we intend to expedite the completion of the performance assessment approval guidance by publishing the Format and Content Guide and Standard Review Plan by October 31, 1996.

The Department will continue to work with the Board to ensure appropriate levels of health and safety for the worker, public, and environment are met. We look forward to continuing to work with you and your staff on Recommendation 94-2.

Sincerely,

Hazel R. O'Leary