

[DOE LETTERHEAD]

April 23, 1996

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

Dear Mr. Conway:

This letter provides an update to the Department's plans for completion of the Integrated Program Plan (IPP) as the final deliverable under the implementation plan for Recommendation 94-3, Rocky Flats Seismic and Systems Safety.

Our respective staffs agreed in January 1996 it would be beneficial to delay the IPP submittal from its January 17, 1996, due date until 30 days after our interim storage facility decision in March 1996 to better incorporate our plans based on that decision. Last month, we decided to proceed with the advanced conceptual design of a new passive storage vault while completing near-term upgrades to Building 371. The new facility option has been identified as the preferred interim storage alternative because:

1. Capital costs of upgrades to Building 371 and a new facility are about equal, but operating costs for the new facility will be significantly lower.
2. The new facility vault will have increased margins of safety and security compared to Building 371.
3. Cost and schedule uncertainties are lower for the new facility alternative because of existing Building 371 conditions (i.e., aging, contamination) and use.

In Fiscal Year (FY) 1996, we plan to complete the structural upgrades to qualify the passive confinement boundary in Building 371 for the new Evaluation Basis Earthquake. In FY 1997, we plan to complete the balance of the safety related Building 371 upgrades, including structural support upgrades and fill protection system structural upgrades.

We also plan during the next six months to complete the conceptual design of a new interim storage vault. We also will complete the appropriate National Environmental Policy Act review prior to a final decision on construction of a new interim storage facility at Rocky Flats.

We will need more than the previously agreed upon 30 days to finalize our IPP. We now expect to complete the IPP by May 15, 1996. We also will be meeting with your staff on April 23, 1996, at Rocky Flats to discuss the IPP, and we will continue working with them as we finalize the deliverable.

Sincerely,

Richard J. Guimond

Assistant Surgeon General, USPHS

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management