



Department of Energy  
Albuquerque Operations Office  
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Albuquerque, New Mexico 87185-5400

DEC 21 2000

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:

Consistent with the Department's implementation plan (IP) for the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DNFSB) Recommendation 98-2, Revision 1, the following provides information regarding Commitment 4.3.8 due December 2000. The Department has completed the commitment represented above and proposes closure of this commitment.

"Project Design Statement (PDS) for 12-44 Fire Protection Upgrade"—This commitment is a new commitment. The draft fire SAR/BIO module, coupled with several weapon-specific HARs, indicated the need to establish UV-activated deluge capability for a number of areas at the Pantex Plant involved in the assembly and disassembly of nuclear explosives. For the majority of affected facilities, the ongoing project to upgrade the capability and reliability of the fire detection and suppression systems has been expanded to include UV detection as the actuator of deluge systems. In this manner, the speed of detection and actuation can be rapid enough to prevent propagation of a fire. Rapid detection and suppression activation would prevent all fire scenarios except those initiated in very close proximity from potentially causing a thermal reaction in the high explosive of a nuclear weapon. However, the Building 12-44 cells were not encompassed by the current upgrade and a separate project will be required. As a result, the Department developed the enclosed PDS to initiate upgrading the fire detection and suppression system in Building 12-44 to provide UV-activated deluge capability. The completion of the physical modifications to Building 12-44 are expected to be completed December 2002 as stated within Commitment 4.3.9.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 505-845-6050, or have your staff contact Dan Glenn at 806-477-3182 or Karen Boardman at 505-845-6045.

*RE Glass*  
R. E. Glass  
Manager

Enclosure (2)

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