



Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

January 2, 2002

The Honorable John T. Conway
Chairman
Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board
625 Indiana Avenue, N.W.
Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20004-2091

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The purpose of this memorandum is to reply to your letter of October 2, 2001, expressing concern about the Integrated Safety Management System of the CH2M Hill Hanford Group (CHG). The concerns in your letter focus on CHG's difficulty in removing weaknesses in its feedback and improvement process, corrective action management, and other documented problem areas.

I have tasked the Manager of the Office of River Protection (ORP) to ensure CHG performs causal analysis of the safety issues, develops corrective actions designed to prevent recurrence, and specifies performance indicators to provide feedback on the effectiveness of the actions. These expectations have been addressed in a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) which is currently being finalized by the ORP staff. The CAP will be provided to you shortly.

The CAP, which addresses findings made by the Office of Environment, Safety and Health in its April 2001 assessment, provides for specific actions to address feedback and improvement programs, corrective action management, management oversight programs, independent assessment programs, post-job reviews, and lessons learned. The CAP includes an aggressive schedule for completion as well as performance measures to ensure that the expected improvements are being achieved. CHG has committed to complete corrective actions in their self-assessment as well as their feedback and improvement processes by April 2002. ORP is working with CHG to ensure that interim actions are in place to perform work in a safe manner while implementing the long-term corrective actions.



I am committed to ensuring that DOE-ORP strengthens both their self-assessment and contractor oversight processes. Headquarters and ORP will jointly perform an annual Integrated Safety Management (ISM) review, to be completed by May 2002, of sufficient scope to assess the effectiveness of the contractor's corrective action process. I further agree that those aspects of the ISM system that have undergone significant changes will be re-verified. As always, your staff is invited to observe our assessment activities. Upon completion of this assessment, I will apprise you of the results and of any corrective actions which might be identified.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Jessie Hill Roberson", followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

Jessie Hill Roberson
Assistant Secretary for
Environmental Management