



Department of Energy
National Nuclear Security Administration
Washington, DC 20585
September 3, 2002

The Honorable John T. Conway
Chairman
Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board
625 Indiana Avenue, N.W.
Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20004-2901

Dear Mr. Chairman:

In your letter of August 1, 2002, you reported that the national laboratory single point-of-contact concept had not supported the W80 enhanced transportation cart (ETC) approval and asked to be informed of the cause within 30 days.

The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) agrees that the concept did not function properly in the case of the W80 ETC. Communication broke down not only at Sandia National Laboratories, but also at each of the sites involved with the W80 ETC. Senior NNSA, laboratory, and BWXT Pantex management are working to resolve this matter. The following changes are being instituted with the September 2002 Senior Management Team (SMT) meeting:

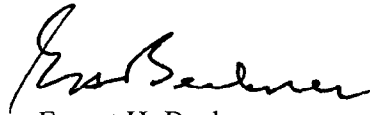
- Reinforce the roles and responsibilities of the general tooling project teams to assure identification of all requirements and incorporation into planning.
- Reinforce the responsibility of the weapon system teams to provide requirements and to follow the progress of general tooling teams to assure implementation on schedule.
- Develop criteria for additional projects that will be tracked by the SMT.
- For those additional projects, review current plans and develop a more effective means to assess progress and to forecast problems.

During my September briefing for you, I can discuss this issue and my process refinements to prevent recurrence. The NNSA agrees that timely support is vital to enhancing the safety of operations at the Pantex Plant. We look forward to demonstrating improvements being made in this regard in the near future.



If you have any questions, you may contact me at 202-586-2179 or have your staff call Luis Paz at 505-845-5059.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Everet Beckner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "E".

Everet H. Beckner
Deputy Administrator
for Defense Programs

cc:

M. Whitaker, S-3.1