



Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

May 19, 2003

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

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The purpose of this letter is to apprise you of our progress toward implementing a cost-effective solution to existing deficiencies with the Old HB-Line (facility) ventilation system. My last letter to you regarding this issue was sent November 1, 2002, and was in response to your letter dated June 26, 2002.

First, automatic dampers will be installed in the ventilation supply system by August 2003. The dampers will automatically throttle the facility ventilation air supply to maintain negative pressure within a prescribed band with respect to the H-Canyon.

Second, a project is being developed to replace the facility exhaust ventilation system with new equipment located within the H-Canyon building to eliminate the potential for unfiltered ground-releases in the event of an exhaust ventilation system failure. I will keep you advised as this project progresses.

Third, a remotely controlled robotic crawler, fitted with cameras and lights, was inserted into the H-Canyon exhaust tunnel and inspected approximately one-third of the tunnel in March 2003. Some deterioration of the concrete surface of the tunnel was observed. The facility exhaust duct appeared to be in sound condition, however, the duct was unsupported in the inspected region of the tunnel (approximately 125 feet). The Department is still evaluating the results of this inspection to determine if any further actions or inspections are needed. The ducting is not required if the previously discussed replacement project is implemented.

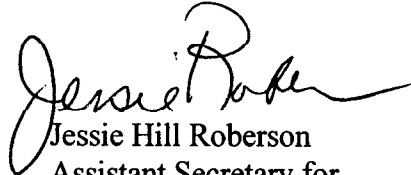
In addition, the Justification for Continued Operations document, which was approved in June 2000 following discovery of the facility exhaust ventilation deficiencies, is being incorporated into the Documented Safety Analysis for H-Canyon. The revised Safety Analysis will be approved by DOE in May 2003.



The preceding actions are intended to ensure that SRS facilities continue to operate safely without undue risk to the worker, the public, and the environment.

If you have any further questions, please call me at (202) 586-7709 or Mr. Paul Golan, Chief Operating Officer, at (202) 586-0738.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jessie Hill Roberson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jessie Hill Roberson
Assistant Secretary for
Environmental Management

cc: Mark Whitaker, DR-1
Jeffrey Allison, SR