



Department of Energy
National Nuclear Security Administration
Washington, DC 20585

FEB 23 2004

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

OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

Dear Chairman Conway

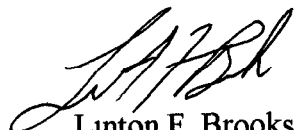
In your letter of March 31, 2003, you requested to be informed of any delays in the schedule of several projects at the Los Alamos National Laboratory. Among them were the Partial Site-Wide Fire Alarm Replacement and the Waste Management Risk Mitigation Projects. Both projects were funded by Congress in Fiscal Year 2001 to mitigate the impact of the Cerro Grande Fire and potential future damages from similar natural disasters.

The Performance Baseline of the Partial Site-Wide Fire Alarm Replacement Project was scheduled for approval in July 2003, but was delayed in order to allow implementation of the recommendations of an External Independent Review conducted by the Department of Energy Office of Engineering and Construction Management. These recommendations have now been successfully implemented and the project's Performance Baseline was approved on January 22, 2004. This approval authorized the project team to commence procurement activities for the project. Starting this date, the project performance will be measured and reported to the Department's senior managers.

The Manager, Los Alamos Site Office, as the delegated Acquisition Executive, approved the Waste Management Risk Mitigation Project performance baseline in February 2003 with a 50 percent design hold point, contingent upon completion of an approved Preliminary Documented Safety Analysis. In July 2003, the Acquisition Executive authorized the project team to complete the design. However, construction activities are still on hold, pending approval of the Preliminary Safety Documentation that is under review by the Los Alamos Site Office. As a result, project completion could be delayed by approximately 11 months.

Our staffs are working with the Los Alamos National Laboratory staff to expedite the review and approval of the Preliminary Documented Safety Analysis. We will keep you and your staff informed of any additional delays in the schedules.

Sincerely,



Linton F. Brooks
Administrator

