



Department of Energy
National Nuclear Security Administration
Washington, DC 20585

July 16, 2004

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

Dear Mr. Chairman:


This letter notifies the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DNFSB) of the schedule for the review of quality assurance at the Pantex Plant pursuant to the DNFSB's June 18, 2004, letter to the Administrator of the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA). Prior to the DNFSB's staff visit, the NNSA Pantex Site Office (PXSO) had been closely monitoring the BWXT Pantex's progress toward improving their Special Tooling Program. The PXSO identified quality-related weaknesses not addressed by the BWXT Pantex Improvement Plan and planned for a comprehensive review of the Tooling Program.

The BWXT Pantex will complete planned improvements by September 30, 2004, and the PXSO will conduct the comprehensive review by November 30, 2004. The review will be led by an independent NNSA organization familiar with quality assurance requirements and safety-related aspects of tooling used at the Pantex Plant. The team will assess compliance using quality assurance related criteria developed from applicable requirements, e.g., Title 10, U.S. Code of Federal Regulations, Part 830, Subpart A, "Quality Assurance Requirements;" the Department of Energy Order 414.1B, "Quality Assurance;" and the NNSA Weapon Quality Policy. The review approach will be established through an approved PXSO plan-of-action with appropriate criteria and review approach documents. Tooling program elements to be assessed are design; procurement; fabrication/modification; repair; maintenance; calibration; acceptance, delivery, and return (e.g., warehousing). An assessment report will be available in December 2004 and a brief to the DNFSB scheduled thereafter.



If you have questions, please contact me or have your staff contact Ms. Wendy Baca at 505-845-6340.

Sincerely,


For Everet H. Beckner
Deputy Administrator
for Defense Programs

cc:

M. Whitaker, DR-1

L. Brooks, NA-1

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