



Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

December 22, 2005

The Honorable A.J. Eggenberger
Chairman
Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board
625 Indiana Avenue, N.W., Suite 700
Washington, DC 20004-2901

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The purpose of this letter is to emphasize key points on the Comprehensive Flowsheet Review of the Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant (WTP). A disk containing the December 13, 2005, briefing materials on the status of the Review has been provided to Mr. Kent Fortenberry.

The Office of River Protection has directed Bechtel National Inc. to conduct a comprehensive review and analysis of the WTP process flowsheet to ensure that the design is technically viable. The scope of this review is to identify any significant issues that could impact the WTP's ability to meet its design throughput, or result in a major safety issue. The WTP Project has undergone extensive efforts to establish an external review team composed of the "best and brightest" industry experts, regardless of their corporate affiliation. This review team is led by Dr. Walter L. Tamosaitis of Washington Group, Inc.

The Department of Energy (DOE) is focused on ensuring that the results from this external review are credible, comprehensive, and technically defensible. DOE appreciates the Board's staff input and participation to date in the review process. It is imperative that all technical issues and concerns, including those from the Board, are identified and available to the review team, in real-time, for timely consideration and resolution during this review process. DOE encourages the Board to continue to remain fully engaged in this review process so that the review team has the benefit of the Board's expertise and insight. We believe it is imperative for the Board to engage with the team leads in the several technical areas, and that the report serves to document the issue raised and discussed with DOE and the Board. Thus, we are working with Mr. Fortenberry to schedule a discussion with the Board no later than January 15, 2006. The external review team is scheduled to prepare their initial draft report by January 13, 2006, and submit their draft final report to DOE on February 28, 2006.



If you have any questions, please call me at (202) 586-7709 or Dr. Inés R. Triay, Chief Operating Officer, at (202) 586-0738.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "JA Rispoli". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

James A. Rispoli
Assistant Secretary for
Environmental Management

cc: M. Whitaker, DR-1
R. Schepens, ORP
J. Eschenberg, ORP