



Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

FEB 03 2006

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

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the status of Commitment 7B in the Department's 2004-1 Implementation Plan, dated June 10, 2005. Specifically, the deliverable on the nuclear safety research function was: "Letter report to the Secretary declaring that adequate technical capabilities are available and providing the basis for this declaration." [January 2006]

Adequate technical capabilities are provided as follows:

- Pending formal establishment of the Office of Nuclear Safety Research (ONSR) and positions, technically competent individuals were provided to support the Nuclear Safety Research Function. EH designated an Acting Manager, detailed a Chief Safety Advisor, and provided a Nuclear Engineer, Program Analyst, and senior technical contractor to support the function.
- Positions were formally established by the Executive Resources Board on January 24, 2006. The established positions are Director, Senior Nuclear Safety Engineer, and Senior Nuclear Research Scientist. We are currently proceeding with advertising and filling these positions.
- Two additional supportive positions (General Engineer and Program Analyst) are currently with the Office of Human Capital Management for approval and will be permanently filled shortly thereafter.
- Pending formal selection for these positions, the Office of Environment, Safety and Health will continue to detail technically capable staff to support the mission of ONSR.

Additional progress is being made in establishing the Nuclear Safety Research Function:

- Procedures have been approved, issued, and are in use. These have been provided to your staff.
- The Nuclear Safety Research Review Panel was formed, held its first meeting where they provided technical and managerial expertise in the evaluation of the Nuclear Safety Research Program and made recommendations on program improvements.

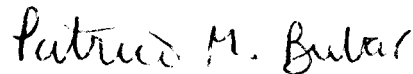


- A web-based data base has been constructed for cataloging existing nuclear safety research reports; it is currently being populated.
- We are actively working on defining the boundaries of a nuclear safety research gap analysis which will be used as a tool to steer future research.

I anticipate having the FY 2006 budget for contracting research in place within the next several months. This requires reprogramming funds, a complicated process that involves entities outside the Department. Additionally, we are continuing to address the activities necessary to have continuity in funding in FY 07.

The Department will inform you when the key permanent staff positions are filled. At that point, we will consider Commitment 7B completed. If you have any questions, please contact me at (301) 903-0502 or have your staff contact Tom Rollow at (202) 586-7449.

Sincerely,



Patrice M. Bubar
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Corporate Performance Assessment
Office of Environment, Safety and Health

cc: C. Sell, Deputy Secretary
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