

[DNFSB LETTERHEAD]

July 6, 1994

The Honorable Thomas P. Grumbly
Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management
Department of Energy
Washington, D. C. 20585

Dear Mr. Grumbly:

The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (Board) has raised its concerns regarding the timely treatment of fissile materials and other radioactive substances being stored in deteriorating condition throughout the DOE weapons complex and recently issued Recommendation 94-1 in that regard. The Board emphasized in Recommendation 94-1 that preparations be expedited to remediate unstable and degrading fissile materials residing in many facilities across the complex to a safer form for interim storage until a longer term disposition option is determined.

The Board notes that one facility in particular, the CPP-603 facility at the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory (INEL), aggressively sought to stabilize degrading spent nuclear fuel stored in its fuel basins by repackaging a portion of the fuel and transferring other portions of fuel to the newer, more structurally sound CPP-666 basin. The Board's staff has reviewed these activities on three occasions since they began in November 1993. Based on the observations made by our staff that the fuel transfer and repackaging activities are proceeding safely and that they are on or ahead of schedule, the Board commends Westinghouse Idaho Nuclear Company, Inc. (WINCO) and the DOE-Idaho staff overseeing this effort on their safe operation to date.

If you need further information, please let me know.

Sincerely,

John T. Conway
Chairman

c:

The Honorable Tara O'Toole, EH-1
Mr. Mark Whitaker, Acting EH-6
Mr. John Wilcynski, Acting Manager, DOE-ID