Department of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

October 21, 2002

The Honorable John T. Conway, Chairman
Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board
625 Indiana Avenue, NW
Suite 700
Washington, DC 20004-2901

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The Department has completed a review of options for returning the Savannah River Site's (SRS) Tank 48-H to high level waste (HLW) service by treating the benzene generating waste that is currently stored in that tank. A report discussing the options evaluated and recommending a path forward is enclosed as the deliverable required under Commitment 3.5 of our implementation plan for Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board Recommendation 2001-1.

The Department's priorities with respect to the SRS HLW system are to safely and expeditiously disposition waste in accordance with our Accelerated Cleanup Plan. As we implement this plan, we will continue to process sludge through the Defense Waste Processing Facility and anticipate near term disposition of low curie salt solution via the Saltstone Disposal Facility. At the same time, we are developing the Salt Waste Processing Facility to disposition higher curie salt waste. This disposition of salt waste, coupled with continuing evaporation, will provide for sufficient HLW storage space and operational flexibility in the tank farms. As we proceed, we will continue to monitor tank space utilization and allocate the appropriate resources to the recovery of Tank 48, should it become necessary to avoid impacts to our waste disposition efforts.

Please feel free to contact me, should you have any questions concerning the enclosed report at (202) 586-7709.

Sincerely,

Paul Golan
Chief Operating Officer
Office of Environmental Management

Enclosure: Click below.

cc w/o enclosure:
M. Whitaker (S-3.1), DOE-HQ
J. Allison, Acting Manager, SR

1. Letter to Mr. C. E. Anderson from S. F. Piccolo

2. Report: Chapters 1-9

3. Report: Attachments