



Department of Energy
National Nuclear Security Administration
Washington, DC 20585

October 10, 2003

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

Dear Mr. Chairman:

In your August 19, 2003, letter regarding lightning protection issues at the Weapons Evaluation Test Facility (WETF) at the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), you requested a response within 30 days regarding the National Nuclear Security Agency's (NNSA) plans for establishing and maintaining defensible lightning protection at WETF and addressing safety system functional classification issues at the Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Facility.

NNSA acknowledges and concurs with the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board's (Board) concerns. Los Alamos Site Office and LANL are performing a thorough review of this situation and considering potential courses of action. Additionally, LANL has hired Mr. Kim Merriweather to evaluate the matter and provide a full and complete response to the Board's concerns. Therefore, the Office of Defense Programs requests an additional 30 days to appropriately respond to your request.

If you have any further questions, please contact me or have a member of your staff contact Sujita Pierpoint at (301) 903-9601.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. Beckner".

Everet H. Beckner
Deputy Administrator
for Defense Programs

c M. Whitaker, DR-1



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