



The Secretary of Energy  
Washington, DC 20585

April 27, 2004

The Honorable John T. Conway  
Chairman  
Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board  
625 Indiana Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20004-2941

Dear Mr. Chairman:

On January 3, 2003, I provided you with the Department of Energy's (DOE) Action Plan to address the findings and recommendations of the DOE Commission on Fire Safety and Preparedness. In a March 1, 2004, letter to you, Assistant Secretary Beverly A. Cook provided you the status of Commitment 2.1 of that Action Plan. Commitment 2.1 was to update the fire protection requirements in DOE Order 420.1A, *Facility Safety*, and issue the revised Order by January 2004.

The revised fire protection requirements in DOE O 420.1A were submitted for DOE Directives review through the review and comment process. However, we are revising other requirements in DOE O 420.1A, particularly the nuclear criticality safety requirements in Section 4.3, mainly to reflect updated industry codes and standards embedded in the Order. Since there is a need to update other requirements in the Order, in addition to the fire protection requirements, we have decided to suspend the review and comment process of the fire protection requirements to await the DOE-wide review of all of the revised requirements in the Order.

The new draft revision to DOE O 420.1A will be completed by June 2004 and submitted for review and comment. We will continue to work with your staff on these proposed revisions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Spencer Abraham". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Spencer" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Abraham".

Spencer Abraham

cc:  
M. Whitaker, DR-1  
R. Hardwick, EH-2

