



Department of Energy
National Nuclear Security Administration
Washington, DC 20585

April 28, 2004

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

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Enclosed is the "Quarterly Report for the Implementation Plan Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board Recommendation 98-2, Accelerating Safety Management Improvements at the Pantex Plant," for the period January 1 through March 31, 2004.

During this reporting period, the Department of Energy/National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) made progress toward the Seamless Safety (SS)-21 start-up authorizations for the W78 and B83. A Nuclear Explosive Safety Study (NESS) was conducted on the W78. On April 5, 2004, the NNSA provided the NESS approval of the W78 Disassembly & Inspection and Repair Operations at the Pantex Plant for single unit processing only. The B83 SS-21 project schedule was rebaselined for startup authorization in October 2004 to accommodate satellite facility scope expansions. Twenty-three out of twenty-seven commitments have been delivered and four remain outstanding.

If you have questions, please call me at 202-586-4879 or have your staff contact Ms. Debra Volk at 505-845-5106.

Sincerely,

David E. Beck
Assistant Deputy Administrator
for Military Application and
Stockpile Operations
Defense Programs

Enclosure

cc w/enclosures:
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Quarterly Report for the Implementation Plan

**Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board
Recommendation 98-2**

*Accelerating Safety Management Improvements
at the Pantex Plant*

January 1 through March 31, 2004

*Assistant Deputy Administrator
for Military Application and Stockpile Operations
National Nuclear Security Administration
U.S. Department of Energy*

1.0 Introduction

On September 25, 2000, the Secretary of Energy approved Revision 1 to the 98-2 Implementation Plan (IP) and provided a copy to the Defense Nuclear Facilities Board (DNFSB). Change 1, to Revision 1, was provided on October 28, 2002, and was accepted by the DNFSB on December 19, 2002. The following report for the period January 1 through March 31, 2004, tracks progress towards completing the commitments outlined in the 98-2 IP, Revision 1, as modified and expanded through Change 1 to Revision 1.

2.0 General Progress

From January 1 through March 31, 2004, the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) worked toward the startup authorizations of the W78 and B83. A Nuclear Explosive Safety Study (NESS) was conducted on the W78. On April 5, 2004, the NNSA provided the NESS approval of the W78 Disassembly & Inspection (D&I) and Repair Operations at the Pantex Plant for single unit processing only. The B83 Seamless Safety (SS)-21 project schedule was rebaselined for startup authorization in October 2004.

3.0 Task Area Status

The status of open commitments is provided below for each task area of the 98-2 IP, Revision 1.

4.0 Safety Issue Resolution

4.1 Define Scope of Work

There are no outstanding commitments within this task area.

4.2 Analyze Hazards

There are no outstanding commitments within this task area.

4.3 Develop and Implement Controls

Commitment 4.3.4 - The purpose of this commitment is to validate implementation of the improved site-wide technical safety requirement (TSR) controls for on-site transportation of nuclear explosives.

Deliverable: The Department of Energy (DOE) Readiness Assessment (RA) Report.

The NNSA is planning to complete and issue the final RA report 90 working days after the BWXT Pantex General Manager declares readiness. This declaration of readiness will be issued upon the completion of the final Contractor Readiness Assessment (CRA) scheduled for March 2005 and the resolution and/or corrective

action plans (post-start findings only) for any identified CRA findings. Reference Official Use Only, "TSR Integrated Implementation Plan, Revision 1," dated August 18, 2003, submitted to the DNFSB on September 30, 2003, for CRA schedules.

4.4 Perform Work

Commitment 4.4.5 - The purpose of this commitment is to authorize startup of the W78 SS-21 process.

Deliverable: The W78 SS-21 Startup Authorization.

The NNSA approved the NESS of W78 D&I and Repair Operations at the Pantex Plant on April 5, 2004. The CRA is complete. The NNSA Pantex Site Office RA is scheduled to begin in May with operations commencing by May 31, 2004.

Commitment 4.4.6 - The purpose of this commitment is to authorize startup of the B83 SS-21 process.

Deliverable: The B83 SS-21 Startup Authorization.

Scheduled completion for the B83 SS-21 startup authorization was May 30, 2004. Weapon response (WR) caused significant project delays. This WR activity was completed on March 19, 2004. The project has subsequently been rebaselined to October 29, 2004, to accommodate satellite facility scope expansions. The project team is reviewing the remaining schedule tasks to identify streamlining opportunities.

Commitment 4.5.1 – The DOE will complete a comprehensive assessment of the actions taken in response to Recommendation 98-2.

Deliverable: Final Assessment Report.

The final assessment report will be completed after NNSA closure of the 98-2 commitments summarized in Sections 4.3 and 4.4 above.