



Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

February 3, 2004

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

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This letter provides an interim response to your letter of November 7, 2003, regarding the retrieval, storage, and disposal of the waste drums at Richland containing Pu-238.

The waste drums containing Pu-238, or any other waste in the burial grounds, will not be retrieved until a plan for safe retrieval, storage, and a disposition path is agreed upon. Although an evaluation has been initiated and archived record retrieval is ongoing, completion of the plan will consume several months. Retrieval of the waste drums containing Pu-238 is anticipated in the June 2004 timeframe. The enclosure provides background information on the material, the disposal paths being evaluated and challenges being encountered.

I will provide the Board an update on these issues by May 28, 2004. If you have any questions, please call me at (202) 586-0738.

Sincerely,

Dr. Inès Triay
Deputy Chief Operating Officer
Office of Environmental Management

Enclosure



cc: Keith Klein, RL
Mark Whitaker, DR-1

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