



The Secretary of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

February 25, 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:

In your letter dated January 20, 2004, you asked to be informed of the analysis and corrective measures to be taken regarding recent events associated with the W56 Dismantlement Program. The enclosed "Report on the Investigation of Cracking a W56 Forward High Explosive Main Charge During Dismantlement (U)," and the accompanying Pantex Site Office (PXSO) memorandum dated February 11, 2004, provide the causal analysis. The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) has scheduled a briefing for you on this subject on February 26, 2004, to address both the causal analysis and the path forward on the corrective actions.

A comprehensive set of corrective actions is being developed. I have tasked the Administrator to complete the NNSA review of the BWXT Pantex, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, and PXSO planned corrective actions, to brief me on these actions, and to report the actions to the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board by March 15, 2004.

The Department has learned valuable lessons from these events regarding our abilities and processes to respond to off-normal events. We will continue to use the knowledge gained to enhance the safety of operations at the Pantex Plant.

If you have questions, please contact me or Mr. Marty Schoenbauer at 202-586-1730.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Spencer Abraham".

Spencer Abraham

2 Enclosures

cc w/o enclosures:
J. McConnell, DNFSB
W. Andrews, DNFSB

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