



The Secretary of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

July 23, 2004

The Honorable John T. Conway
Chairman
Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board
625 Indiana Avenue, NW, Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20004-2901

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This letter is to inform you that Commitment 118E of Revision 2 to the *Implementation Plan for Stabilization and Storage of Nuclear Material* for the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board Recommendation 2000-1 (July 2002) will not be completed by July 31, 2004. Commitment 118E will be completed by October 29, 2004.

Commitment 118E requires complete fuel removal from both the K West Basin and the K East Basin to the Cold Vacuum Drying Facility. As of May 17, 2004, approximately 1,816 Metric Tons Heavy Metal (MTHM) have been removed over the past four years. Remaining is a balance of 289 MTHM to complete the work at Richland.

Several factors have contributed to missing this commitment. The primary cause is the fuel is more degraded than anticipated. This has slowed the packaging operations and caused water system filter plugging. The degraded fuel is adding fuel particulates to the basin water which results in elevated airborne radioactivity, additional personnel protection controls, increased equipment maintenance, and additional fuel washing cycles.

If you have any further questions concerning these issues, please call Dr. Inés Triay, Deputy Chief Operating Officer for Environmental Management, at (202) 586-0738 or Mr. Keith Klein, Manager, Richland Operations Office, at (509) 376-7395.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Spencer Abraham", is centered below the word "Sincerely,".

Spencer Abraham

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

