



Department of Energy
National Nuclear Security Administration
Washington, DC 20585

September 17, 2004

OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

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

Dear Mr. Chairman:

In your letter of August 6, 2004, you requested that within 45 days of receipt of the letter, NNSA provide the results of thorough, sitewide evaluations of the training and qualification programs at Los Alamos National Laboratory, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL), and the Nevada Test Site (NTS). Further, you requested that within 30 days of completion of these evaluations, NNSA representatives brief the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board on the corrective action plans designed to address any findings.

In support of the Los Alamos Site Office, the NNSA Service Center completed a high-level Phase 1 review of the programmatic elements of LANL's nuclear facility personnel training and qualification program May 11-14, 2004. The review team found six systemic issues, noting weaknesses in training and qualification of Facility and Waste Operations personnel, outdated Training Implementation Matrices, incorrect exceptions to Departmental requirements without documented justification, reliance on expert-based processes rather than systems-based processes, weak trainer qualification programs, and weak or non-existent continuing training. The final Phase 1 report has been forwarded to your staff separately. Within 90 days of the resumption of nuclear work at Los Alamos, the Los Alamos Site Office plans to conduct a more detailed, performance-based Phase 2 assessment at the nuclear facility level to evaluate the implementation of the program and its effectiveness.

The NNSA Service Center also completed an assessment of the LLNL training and qualification program on behalf of the Livermore Site Office July 12-16, 2004. The review team found two systemic issues regarding insufficient program documentation to assure consistent application of requirements, and weak or nonexistent continuing training programs for instructional staff. The final LLNL report has been forwarded to your staff separately.

On September 3, 2004, the Nevada Site Office Manager reported that the nuclear facilities at NTS are in various stages of compliance with DOE Order 5480.20A. NSO conducted an assessment of the Device Assembly Facility training and qualification program during the week of September 13, 2004 in accordance with DOE Standard 1070-94, and a final



assessment report will be completed by October 1, 2004. A copy of the NSO report will be forwarded to your staff separately. The NSO Manager reported that training and qualification reviews of LLNL and LANL subcritical experiment programs were evaluated during the NSO Readiness Assessments of the PIANO and ARMANDO subcritical experiments, respectively. NSO has requested LLNL and LANL develop corrective action plans to address all findings identified during the Readiness Assessments. The LLNL corrective action plan will be completed by October 1, 2004. LANL's preparation of their corrective action plan has been delayed due to the LANL standdown, and this plan will be incorporated as part of the LANL Nevada Test Site restart effort. In both cases, NSO will track all corrective actions to acceptable closure and will evaluate for full compliance with DOE Order 5480.20A prior to conduct of the next subcritical experiment.

As requested, Mr. Michael Thompson of my staff will coordinate with your staff to schedule NNSA representatives from LASO, LSO, and NSO to brief the Board on corrective action plans for LANL, LLNL, and NTS. Please feel free to contact me, or have your staff contact Mr. Thompson at 301-903-5648 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Brooks', written in a cursive style.

Linton F. Brooks
Administrator

cc: E. Wilmot, DOE-LASO
C. Yuan-Soo Hoo, DOE-LSO
K. Carlson, DOE-NSO
M. Whitaker, DR-1