



The Secretary of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

May 3, 2004

The Honorable John T. Conway
Chairman
Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board
625 Indiana Avenue, NW, Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20004-2941

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The purpose of this letter is to provide a revision to Commitment 4.2.1.3 in the Department's Implementation Plan for Software Quality Assurance (SQA) in response to Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (Board) Recommendation 2002-1. Commitment 4.2.1.3, due in November 2003, required the Department to perform a gap analysis on the six toolbox codes to determine the actions needed to bring the codes into compliance with SQA criteria and to develop a schedule with milestones to upgrade each code based on the gap analysis results.

Since March 2003 when the Implementation Plan was approved, the scope of this commitment has evolved based on experience gained. Additional departmental peer and code developer reviews are being performed to finalize the six gap analyses reports. On December 3, 2003, when we reported this commitment as partially complete, three of the six gap analyses reports were submitted as interim reports, for the codes MACCS2, ALOHA, and EPICODE. On January 29, 2004, the remaining three gap analysis interim reports, for the codes MELCOR, GENII, and CFAST, were completed. The interim gap analyses reports concluded that software-induced errors did not exist in the codes that would have led to non-conservatisms at defense nuclear facilities. However, the Department believes that the additional reviews are necessary and will further improve the technical accuracy of the gap analyses effort.

Since the Department does not own the six toolbox codes, a firm schedule with milestones for upgrading each code cannot be developed in time to be included in the final gap analysis reports as originally conceived. The interim gap analyses reports do include an estimate of the level of effort required to upgrade each code. The Office of Environment, Safety and Health (EH) is also working with program Secretarial Offices and the toolbox code developers to evaluate the feasibility for conducting upgrades to the existing codes.

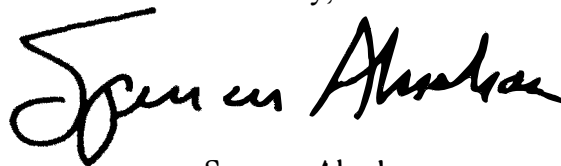
Completing the additional code developer and peer reviews will extend delivery of the final gap analysis reports to May 2004. The delay in completing this commitment will not impact other ongoing SQA Implementation Plan activities.



The Department will complete its evaluation of the feasibility for conducting toolbox code upgrades, define the path forward, schedule, and milestones, and provide the results in the October 2004 periodic Board briefing. Due to the fact that these changes only affect this one commitment, a revision of the entire 2002-1 Implementation Plan is considered unnecessary.

If you have any questions, please contact me or have members of your staff contact Mr. Frank B. Russo at (301) 903-8008.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Spencer Abraham". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "S".

Spencer Abraham

cc:

Kyle E. McSlarrow, S-2
David K. Garman, S-3
Mark B. Whitaker, DR-1
Frank B. Russo, EH-3