



## Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

MAR 13 2007

The Honorable A. J. Eggenberger  
Chairman  
Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board  
625 Indiana Avenue, NW, Suite 700  
Washington, DC 20004-2941

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The purpose of this letter is to notify the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DNFSB) that Commitments 120E and 122E in the Implementation Plan (IP) for Recommendation 2000-1, *Prioritization for Stabilizing Nuclear Materials*, are at risk. The IP commitments are for completion of bulk sludge and final pass sludge removal from the K East Basin by May 31, 2007.

An analysis performed by the Department of Energy, Richland Operations Office (RL) K Basins Closure (KBC) Project Integrated Project Team indicates that there is a risk that the commitment date of May 31, 2007, may be missed based on current progress in transferring sludge from the K East Basin to the K West Basin. The team has identified four major factors contributing to the slower than planned sludge transfer rates. The factors are:

- Foreign material has been unexpectedly entering the sludge stream, resulting in delays for installation of strainers and back flushing pumps and hoses.
- Additional delays have been caused by the need to frequently recharge pump seals due to pressure loss.
- Difficulty in maintaining the proper sludge dilution has led to sludge accumulation in pump impellers, causing pumps to plug and vibrate and leading to further operational delays.
- Personnel availability has been inconsistent due to the operational delays and shutdowns.

At the projected rate of transfer, the best case forecast for completing K East bulk sludge removal is June 13, 2007. We are currently assessing the various risks to determine valid "most likely finish" and "worse case finish" dates. On January 23, 2007, RL notified the contractor, in writing, of the expectation to meet the baseline work scope commitments for the transfer of sludge from K East to K West. The letter directed the contractor to prepare a recovery plan. The plan, delivered on February 13, 2007, shows completion of the sludge transfer activities on June 13, 2007. This plan has been provided to your staff and identifies ways the contractor will be working to improve the schedule and meet the



May 31, 2007, DNFSB Commitments. On February 21, 2007, RL sent a letter to the contractor acknowledging receipt of the recovery plan and indicated its intent to closely monitor the contractor's performance of the submitted recovery plan. The RL's letter also expressed extreme concern about the lack of progress in completing critical K Basin cleanup activities such as completion of the sludge transfer activities.

This letter is to provide you with early notification of the potential to miss these commitments and to assure you that DOE management focus and attention are being applied. RL and Environmental Management Headquarters have met with contractor senior management to assure sufficient resources are available to complete the work. Neither safety nor quality will be sacrificed for schedule acceleration.

If you have any questions, please call me on (202) 586-0738, or Mr. Dae Y. Chung, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Safety Management and Operations, at (202)586-5151.t

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Inés R. Triay". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "I".

Dr. Inés R. Triay  
Chief Operating Officer for  
Environmental Management

cc: K. Klein, RL  
M.tWhitaker, HS-1.1t