



Department of Energy
National Nuclear Security Administration
Washington, DC 20585



October 20, 2010

The Honorable Peter S. Winokur
Chairman
Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board
625 Indiana Avenue, N.W., Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This is in reference to your August 5, 2010, letter including a Staff Issues Report on a review of the Criticality Experiments Facility (CEF) at the Nevada National Security Site. Your letter requested two reports and briefings to be provided to the Board by November 3, 2010; at this time, however, our actions to resolve the issues in your letter are still in development. The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) will respond to your request no later than February 11, 2011. The response will occur before the start of operations affected by the issues raised in your letter.

NNSA completed the Operational Readiness Review (ORR) of the CEF on July 29, 2010. The ORR resulted in 10 Pre-Start and 26 Post Start findings. A number of the issues identified by your staff were also identified as findings by the readiness review team. National Security Technologies, LLC; Los Alamos National Laboratory; and the Nevada Site Office (NSO) are currently developing corrective action plans to address the findings and working to close the Pre-Start findings. The results of this work will be utilized to develop the responses to all of the issues identified by your staff. All Pre-Start findings must be closed and the corrective action plans for the Post Start findings must be approved by NSO prior to NNSA authorizing the start of operations for the CEF.

The NSO will continue to coordinate with your staff and keep them informed of progress during the interim. If you have any questions, please contact me or have your staff contact Mr. James McConnell at (202) 586-4379.

Sincerely,

DONALD L. COOK
Deputy Administrator
for Defense Programs



cc: T. D'Agostino, NA-1
S. Mellington, NSO