

[DNFSB LETTERHEAD]

November 15, 1994

The Honorable Thomas P. Grumbly
Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management
Department of Energy
Washington, D.C. 20585

Dear Mr. Grumbly:

The Board issued its Recommendation 94-1 because there are certain plutonium-bearing materials at the Department of Energy's defense nuclear facilities that pose substantial risks increasing with time. Near-term attention to remedying these situations is called for, and unnecessary delays should be avoided.

It is with pleasure that the Board makes the following comments regarding activities at the Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP) at the Hanford facility. Mr. Eric Vogt, who is directing the PFP and the work leading to its decommissioning, has taken advantage of the time in waiting for completion of an Environmental Assessment to accomplish a large amount of cleanup preliminary to and necessary for undertaking the activities covered by the assessment. This has led to expected advancement of the date at which operations falling under the intent of Recommendation 94-1 can be started at PFP.

This initiative on the part of Mr. Vogt and his staff is to be commended. The Board suggests that similar activity at the K-East Basin and other facilities awaiting the results of Environmental Assessments would be highly desirable and consistent with environmental, safety, and health laws which accommodate such activity.

Sincerely,

John T. Conway
Chairman

c: Mark Whitaker, EH-6