

Bruce Hamilton, Chairman
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DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

Washington, DC 20004-2901



October 18, 2019

The Honorable James Richard Perry
Secretary of Energy
US Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585-1000

Dear Secretary Perry:

On April 11, 2018, four waste drums at Idaho National Laboratory underwent over-pressurization, ejecting their lids and spreading radiological waste within a facility. Flammable gases generated by the waste may have played a role in the event.

On March 12, 2019, the Board issued a reporting requirement pursuant to 42 USC § 2286b(d) for data from DOE regarding flammable gas hazards associated with solid wastes. DOE provided a response on May 7, 2019, which was only partially responsive to the reporting requirement because it provided data relevant to the Idaho National Laboratory, but not other DOE sites.

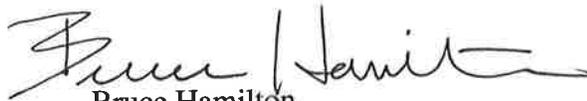
DOE recently issued an Operating Experience report that formally initiates an extent of condition review that will, among other things, collect the data requested by the Board. DOE requested its field sites to report their results by October 31, 2019. Earlier, DOE's Office of Environmental Management had initiated a similar review at its sites, with a reporting date of September 30, 2019.

In recognition of DOE's current schedule, the Board is updating its previous reporting requirement. Pursuant to 42 USC § 2286b(d), the Board requests a response to the following questions, including analysis or supporting data, by November 15, 2019. Please provide this information directly to the Board via formal correspondence by the stated deadline.

- Has the department conducted an assessment to determine if defense nuclear facilities, beyond those at Idaho National Laboratory, have above-ground drums that have not had their flammable gas concentrations measured?
- Has the department identified any vented drums, beyond those at Idaho National Laboratory, that were sampled and found to have flammable or near-flammable conditions?

- Has the department identified other defense nuclear facilities, beyond those at Idaho National Laboratory, that have, or could have, solid nuclear wastes that include metal carbides?

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bruce Hamilton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Bruce Hamilton
Chairman

c: Mr. Joe Olencz