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# DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

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98-0001733



April 15, 1998

The Honorable Federico Peña  
Secretary of Energy  
1000 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20585-1000

Dear Secretary Peña:

The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (Board) has reviewed the Department of Energy's (DOE) request to modify the implementation of Recommendation 94-1, *Improved Schedule for Remediation in the Defense Nuclear Facility Complex*, for the Savannah River Site (SRS). Changes to the implementation plan for Recommendation 94-1 proposed by DOE in its letter of January 9, 1998, for work at SRS include the deletion of three milestones related to removal of sludge from basins used to store spent nuclear fuel. Additionally, the letter provides the status of selected programs relating to the stabilization of highly enriched uranium solutions and vitrification of solutions containing americium/curium.

The Board accepts the proposal to delete the three milestones, based on the actions taken to improve the water quality in the basins. However, the Board is disappointed that DOE is proposing neither revised milestones for stabilization of the highly enriched uranium and americium/curium solutions nor a clear path forward. The Board expects DOE to provide revised commitments on these activities as part of the complex-wide implementation plan change request presently being prepared.

A plan detailing the phased canyon strategy was provided to the Board in October 1997. This plan, entitled "Savannah River Site Chemical Separation Facilities Multi-Year Plan," integrates complex-wide material stabilization efforts that should be conducted using SRS's processing canyons. The Board agrees with the schedule for stabilization of SRS materials using the canyons and encourages DOE to utilize the canyons' capabilities for other materials requiring stabilization.

If you have comments or questions, please feel free to call me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John T. Conway". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over the typed name and title below it.

John T. Conway  
Chairman

c: Mr. James M. Owendoff  
Mr. Mark B. Whitaker, Jr.