

October 23, 2001

Mr. Larry Penberthy
Penberthy Vitrification Associates
7141 Fauntleroy Way
Seattle, Washington 98136

Dear Mr. Penberthy:

Thank you for your letters of March 29, June 30, and October 7, 2001, on the plans of the Department of Energy (DOE) for disposal of Americium-Curium (Am-Cm) solutions at Savannah River, in which you describe your capabilities to make glass with this material. The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (Board) is familiar with your work and the many successes you have had in solving vitrification problems. In particular, we have studied the performance of your Electromelt melter in DOE tests.

As you know, DOE originally planned to build a facility to vitrify the Am-Cm solutions separately from other high-level waste. Recently, however, DOE has decided to send the material to the H-Tank Farm, and thence to the existing Defense Waste Processing Facility in the 2004-2007 time frame. Initial calculations show that the waste acceptance criteria are likely to be met, so DOE does not believe there will be any difficulty vitrifying this material.

By statute, the Board reviews and comments on DOE's decisions for waste treatment. The Board has no authority to direct DOE one way or another.

Sincerely,

John T. Conway
Chairman