



**Department of Energy**  
Washington, DC 20585

**JAN 23 2009**

The Honorable A. J. Eggenberger  
Chairman  
Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board  
635 Indiana Avenue, N.W., Suite 700  
Washington, DC 20004-2901

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The purpose of this letter is to report the Department of Energy's (DOE) closure of the electrical safety issues at our Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP) and at Hanford tank farms identified in your September 17, 2008, letter to the Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management.

On December 4, 2008, representatives of our Richland Operations Office and the Office of River Protection briefed the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board on the actions taken to address the items identified in the September 17, 2008, letter regarding the PFP and tank farms, respectively. Copies of the two presentations are enclosed. Based on the presentations and subsequent discussions DOE believes these issues are closed.

One follow-up action was identified for the PFP during the discussions. This action entails the PFP contractor conducting an evaluation, related to protection of the 234-5Z switchgear that compares the merits of one or more of the following options:

- Installation of spray shield(s) to protect the back of 234-5Z switchgear;
- Plugging or removal of selected fire suppression sprinkler heads near the switchgear;
- Installation of spray shields at selected sprinkler heads; and
- Reducing combustible loading in the switchgear room.

The purpose of these actions is to reduce the potential for damage should the sprinkler system be activated. We expect to complete this evaluation by May 31, 2009.



If you have any further questions, please contact me at (202) 586-0738 or Dae Chung, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Safety Management and Operations, at (202) 586-5151.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Owendoff".

James M. Owendoff  
Chief Operations Officer for  
Environmental Management

Enclosures

cc:

I. Triay, EM-1

M. Whitaker, HS-1.1

D. Brockman, RL

S. Olinger, ORP