



Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

June 12, 2007

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Hon Ron Wyden

The Honorable Ron Wyden
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Wyden:

I appreciate your continued interest and support for the Department of Energy's Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant (WTP) project. Your May 10, 2007, letter requested that the Department describe what actions the Department will take to address the Inspector General's findings concerning the design and procurement of the Integrated Control Network and the Department's management of the Waste Treatment Facility. The Inspector General issued the referenced Audit Report, "Quality Assurance Standards for the Integrated Control Network at the Hanford Site's Waste Treatment Plant," dated May 2007, on May 4, 2007.

As noted in the Inspector General's report, the Office of Environmental Management agrees with the recommendations in the report and has begun to take action to further enhance the Department's oversight of Bechtel National, Inc. (BNI) procurement process. The actions being taken to implement the recommendations in the report are as follows:

- The Department is evaluating whether the Integrated Control Network for the WTP meets appropriate quality assurance standards for its immobilization of high-level waste functions. The evaluation is planned to be completed by June 2008.
- The Department is reviewing the Integrated Control Network for compliance with the Departmental Directive for safety software. The review is planned to be completed by March 2008.
- The Department has recognized the need to increase the stature of the quality assurance function within the Office of River Protection and provide additional quality assurance personnel. An Assistant Manager position for Environmental Safety and Quality has been established and filled by William Taylor, an experienced senior executive service individual. Also, the Office of River Protection quality assurance staff has been increased by two federal professionals and three contract support professionals.

Before the Inspector General's audit was complete, the Department had already begun to focus on weaknesses in its oversight of the BNI contract, especially in the area of quality assurance. The first action was to conduct an assessment of BNI's procurement process,

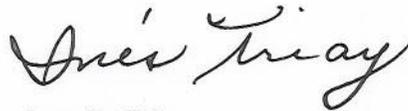


which identified some systemic deficiencies. BNI is currently working to resolve these concerns.

The next action was to conduct several additional scheduled and unscheduled assessments of BNI. These added assessments included: the procurement process, a graded approach to quality assurance requirements, the corrective action program, a commercial grade dedicated process, the training program, document control, and design control. These added assessments represent a strong commitment by the Department to quality by applying fiscal and personnel resources to the WTP project. Further, the Department believes these assessments will identify unknown weak programmatic areas, confirm the extent of condition for known problems, and develop the appropriate corrective actions for issues.

Thank you for your continuing support of the Department's programs. If you have any questions, please contact me or Mr. Eric G. Nicoll, Acting Assistant Secretary for Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs, at (202) 586-5450.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ines R. Triay". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Ines R. Triay
Chief Operating Officer
Office of Environmental Management