



Department of Energy
National Nuclear Security Administration
Washington, DC 20585
December 21, 2006

OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

Ms. Danielle Brian
Executive Director
Project On Government Oversight
666 11th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Ms. Brian:

This is in response to your letter of November 6, 2006. Let me assure you that I take very seriously the risks posed by classified removable media.

In 2005, we formed the Diskless Workstation Taskforce with the plan to eliminate classified removable electronic media (CREM) within our environment and, where that is an impracticality, to control and protect it through stringent physical and administrative controls.

The diskless workstation conversion effort will convert all of DOE's classified workstations, including peripherals, to a "diskless" architecture. In simplest terms, diskless means that the general user cannot read from or write to any form of removable media – all data being accessed, saved, and protected at the network level.

The Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) red network is the laboratory's primary classified network. The projects, valued at over \$40M, will upgrade the red network's connectivity and expand the upgraded network to most areas of the laboratory where it did not previously exist. The effort provides the network infrastructure necessary for diskless workstations. Through the end of October 2006, the project was at approximately 90 percent completion, with the balance of the work to be completed in this calendar year.

The workstation used in the recent LANL incident was diskless as the user could not read from or write to CREM at the workstation. The vault room itself was not diskless because the servers and other network devices, although they were in a locked storage cabinet, had open ports by which data could be accessed. Such network devices are protected in a number of ways, including placing them in secure, locked cabinets with only limited and controlled access. The security failure occurred when a network device was accessed within the vault by an individual who had working access to the room and the server storage cabinet.



With regard to the Diskless Project, we have accelerated our efforts to destroy data no longer required. We are moving stored and archived data from CREM to network-based storage. We are working on connecting networks electronically, as opposed to physically, so we can move data between them. We are eliminating the need and ability to produce CREM, a main objective of the diskless workstation conversion effort.

The Department is on schedule to complete the conversion to diskless workstations by the end of FY 2008 with slightly more than 50 percent of the Department's workstations diskless as of October 31, 2006. We have determined that, even with additional funding, the schedule cannot be accelerated because, for many sites, the classified network structure must be modified in order to move forward.

DOE has taken many actions in addition to those above to improve the security at all sites. We take the protection of our assets very seriously and continue to work diligently to ensure we are secure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. F. Brooks', written in a cursive style.

Linton F. Brooks
Administrator