



Department of Energy
National Nuclear Security Administration
Washington, DC 20585
October 30, 2002

Ms. Danielle Brian
Project on Government Oversight
666 11th Street, NW
Suite 500
Washington, DC 20001-4542

Dear Ms. Brian:

Thank you for your October 7, 2002, memorandum expressing concern about the amount of time it will take to relocate the Los Alamos National Laboratory's Technical Area (TA)-18 missions and your ideas about moving the Sandia Pulsed Reactor (SPR) to the Device Assembly Facility (DAF) at the Nevada Test Site.

The final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), released last month, indicates our preference is to relocate a select group of missions to the DAF. My staff is assessing schedule alternatives and budgets for a potential move to the DAF that balances operational, security, and programmatic needs. Any move will take several years to execute due to the complexity conducting nuclear facility modifications, meeting safe operational requirements, and maintaining mission capabilities. A final decision is anticipated before the end of the year when the Record of Decision is issued for the final EIS.

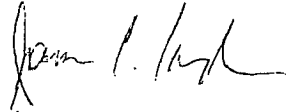
In the interim, TA-18 will remain open to support vital national security work in the areas of Homeland Defense, Emergency Response, Nuclear Nonproliferation, Stockpile Stewardship Science, and Nuclear Criticality Safety. The Los Alamos National Laboratory and the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) recently validated the level and type of mission-related activities over the next few years. Much of this work cannot be performed through simulations as you mention in your correspondence. However, we are continuing to look for opportunities to employ simulation where it makes sense to do so. While relocation activities are ongoing, NNSA will continue to maintain TA-18 in a safe, secure manner.

A separate review on the SPR has been conducted and the analysis indicates that the best solution, at the present time, is to leave it at the Sandia National Laboratories (SNL) in Albuquerque, New Mexico. This decision balances the benefits of the potential relocation against long-term support of mission requirements and maintenance of technical capabilities at SNL.



If you have further questions, please contact Dr. David Crandall, Associate Deputy Administrator for Research, Development and Simulation at 202-586-0568.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Everett H. Beckner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "E" and "B".

Everet H. Beckner
Deputy Administrator
for Defense Programs