

Rocky Flats Coalition of Local Governments

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February 25, 2002

Honorable Spencer Abraham
Secretary of Energy
United States Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20585

Dear Secretary Abraham:

As the Board of Directors of the Rocky Flats Coalition of Local Governments, we are writing concerning the ongoing delays of shipments of plutonium metals and oxides to the Department of Energy's Savannah River Site.

The Coalition comprises elected officials from the seven local governments that surround Rocky Flats and collectively we represent approximately 800,000 people. One of the key commitments DOE has continually made to our communities is that plutonium metals and oxides will be removed at a rate to support a 2006 closure. We remain concerned that the ongoing dispute with South Carolina officials and the recent commitment made to New Mexico officials has needlessly jeopardized the goal of closing Rocky Flats in 2006.

As you noted when DOE released its "Top-To-Bottom Review", Rocky Flats serves as a model for our shared goal of expediting risk-reduction activities and, in turn, cleanup activities. Because of our involvement in Rocky Flats issues, we have first-hand knowledge from both a risk and cost perspective of the importance of focusing on high priority risk reduction activities first. We are concerned that at the same time that you are advocating applying the Rocky Flats' approach for the entire Department, the Administration's actions have hindered DOE-Rocky Flats Field Office's ability to close Rocky Flats in 2006.

Rocky Flats has all the pieces in place for an accelerated closure: a defined scope, cost, and schedule; regulatory support for closure; a protective and practical cleanup strategy; bipartisan support from the congressional delegation; measured progress; and community alignment on future use. Central to this mission is the plutonium disposition strategy, and there is no greater risk reduction activity at Rocky Flats than stabilizing and removing to an off-site location the plutonium metals and oxides.

The delay in removing these materials draws into question commitments DOE made to our communities to clean up Rocky Flats in 2006. We appreciate steps the President and you have

taken to solve this complex international issue, including full funding in the President's budget. We however remain concerned that with the elimination of a disposal pathway for material slated for immobilization and delays in shipping materials suitable for MOX fuels, we have moved backwards instead of forward in cleaning up and closing down Rocky Flats in 2006.

Assurances you have provided to Senator Wayne Allard and Representative Mark Udall are important. Nevertheless, assurances without action are of little consolation to our communities, so we request DOE provide us with a written timeline, consistent with a 2006 closure, for resolving all issues related to the disposition of Rocky Flats' plutonium metals and oxides. Further, DOE must initiate shipments of plutonium metals suitable for MOX fuel in March 2002, and resolve all issues related to materials not suitable for MOX fuel to support their removal in 2002 and, in turn, a 2006 closure.

Sincerely yours,

/s/
Michelle Lawrence
Jefferson County

/s/
Sam Dixion
City of Westminster

/s/
Lisa Morzel
City of Boulder

/s/
Hank Stovall
City and County of Broomfield

/s/
Lorraine Anderson
City of Arvada

/s/
Karen Imbierowicz
Town of Superior

/s/
Paul Danish
Boulder County

cc: Sen. Wayne Allard
Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell
Rep. Mark Udall
Rep. Tom Tancredo
Gov. Bill Owens