

February 6, 1997

Mr. Francisco L. (Linn) Lisbona III  
Radiation Safety Officer  
Alliant Techsystems  
Building 502  
Twin Cities Arsenal  
New Brighton, MN 55112

SUBJECT: RESULTS OF JANUARY 7-8, 1997, CONFIRMATORY SURVEY OF THE PBL RANGE  
AND NW SCAR AT THE ALLIANT TECHSYSTEMS PROVING GROUNDS IN ELK  
RIVER, MINNESOTA

Dear Mr. Lisbona:

On January 7-8, 1997, the Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education (ORISE), under contract to the NRC, conducted a confirmatory survey of the PBL Range and NW SCAR at the Alliant Techsystems Proving Grounds (ATPG) site in Elk River, Minnesota. The purpose of the survey was to assess the acceptability of Alliant's final radiological data for the release for unrestricted use of the PBL Range and the NW SCAR facilities. Additional areas of the ATPG are scheduled to be surveyed for unrestricted release in the Spring of 1997.

Enclosed are the results from the January 1997 ORISE confirmatory survey, *Interim Letter Report for the Alliant Techsystems Proving Grounds, Elk River, Minnesota*, dated January 28, 1997. The results indicate that the surface contamination levels are less than the NRC guidelines for the release for unrestricted use, for both the PBL Range and the NW SCAR. However, for soil samples collected at the PBL Range, two of five samples collected by ORISE and three of four samples previously collected by your contractor, Scientific Ecology Group (SEG) and provided to ORISE, were analyzed to be in excess of the release guideline of 35 pCi/g for depleted uranium. The samples in excess of the guideline ranged from 36.2 to 68.9 pCi/g. Although five soil samples collected at the NW SCAR all resulted in values less than the release guidelines, ORISE indicated that after the surveys were completed, they were told the samples may have been collected where clean fill had been brought in. It appears that these soil samples should have been collected another 6 to 12 inches lower, to ensure they were representative of the pre-existing soil.

As a result of the confirmatory survey conducted by ORISE, we can not approve for unrestricted release either the NW SCAR or the PBL Range at this time. For the PBL Range, it appears additional remediation is necessary. Discussions between NRC Region III and ORISE indicate that the disparities between the SEG and ORISE results for the same samples may be due to the difference in counting times. ORISE indicated that SEG counted the soil samples for five minutes, where ORISE counted for fifteen minutes. The shorter count time would lead to a larger error band in the results.

F. L. Lisbona, III

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For the NW SCAR, the issue of whether the ORISE soil samples were collected in clean fill versus previously existing soil needs to be addressed. A decision on what, if any, additional action is warranted will be made accordingly.

Please respond within 30 days of the date of this letter as to what actions you intend to take to address these issues.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact me at (630) 829-9615, or William Snell of my staff at (630) 829-9871.

Sincerely,

Original Signed by

B. L. Jorgensen, Chief  
Decommissioning Branch

Enclosure: As stated

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cc w/encl: John Hickey, NMSS/DWM  
Tim Vitkus, ORISE

bcc w/encl: PUBLIC (IE07)

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