

Disposition, Environmental Management, Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20585.

Issued in Washington, DC, on March 21, 2000.

**Mark B. Whitaker, Jr.,**  
Departmental Representative to the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board.

**The Secretary of Energy**

Washington, DC 20585

March 13, 2000.

The Honorable John T. Conway,  
Chairman, Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board, 625 Indiana Avenue, NW, Suite 700, Washington, D.C. 20004.

Dear Mr. Chairman: This letter acknowledges receipt of your Recommendation 2000-1, "Stabilization and Storage of Nuclear Materials," issued on January 14, 2000, concerning continued efforts to stabilize and safely store the materials identified in your previous Recommendation 94-1. I share the Board's concerns that the nuclear materials remaining to be stabilized throughout the DOE complex pose significant risks, and I agree it is a priority to improve the Department's performance reducing these risks.

The Department has made progress in the last six years. Most of the very immediate concerns prompting Recommendation 94-1 have been mitigated. Stabilization activities are continuing. The Department has updated its safety analyses and implemented needed compensatory measures to ensure interim safe storage of nuclear materials. We recognize, however, that we must remain focussed until the task is complete.

We are working aggressively to complete the resource-loaded baselines for the Savannah River Site and the Los Alamos National Laboratory to finish the stabilization work begun under 94-1. By the end of April, we plan to provide you with an implementation plan for completing the remaining 94-1 activities and satisfying the risk-reduction requirements of Recommendation 2000-1. It is our intention that this combined plan will serve as the Department's 2000-1 Implementation Plan and enable the closure of Recommendation 94-1. Moreover, as we proceed with implementing Recommendation 2000-1, we will continually examine options and related resource requirements that may allow schedule acceleration.

Accordingly, the Department accepts sub-recommendations 1 through 9 of Recommendation 2000-1, which deal specifically with the technical aspects of our stabilization plans. We do not accept sub-recommendations 10 and 11. While we agree that the funding requirements of our work need to be addressed, funding is not the only factor affecting the implementation of stabilization activities. Our rate of progress to date has also been affected by such factors as lack of adequate contractor baselines to guide work, technology maturity, facility and operational readiness, and unanticipated difficulties in maintaining and operating

aging facilities. Currently, the accepted Implementation Plan for 94-1 is the December 1998 version, which has since been revised to reflect these factors. As such, an analysis of funding requirements for the accepted Implementation Plan would not provide a realistic or meaningful measure of how our stabilization activities could be accelerated. In addition, budgetary shortfalls have not made implementation impracticable and thus do not provide a basis for so notifying the President and the Congress.

Dr. Carolyn Huntoon, Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management, is accountable to me for effective implementation of this recommendation. Mr. David Huizenga, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Integration and Disposition in Environmental Management, is the responsible manager for the preparation of the Implementation Plan. He will work with you, other board members, and your staff to develop an acceptable Implementation Plan meeting our mutual expectations. He can be reached at (202) 586-5151.

Yours sincerely,  
Bill Richardson.

[FR Doc. 00-7499 Filed 3-24-00; 8:45 am]

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**DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY**

**Federal Energy Regulatory Commission**

[Docket No. RP99-496-005]

**Southern Natural Gas Company; Notice of Proposed Changes in FERC Gas Tariff**

March 21, 2000.

Take notice that on March 17, 2000, Southern Natural Gas Company (Southern) tendered for filing to become part of its FERC Gas Tariff, Seventh Revised Volume No. 1, the revised tariff sheets in Appendix A to the filing, with an effective date of March 1, 2000.

Southern hereby files to place into effect as of March 1, 2000 an interim rate reduction as reflected on the tariff sheets listed on Appendix A. The interim rates set forth on such sheets are proposed to go into effect for customers consenting to the offer of settlement filed by Southern on March 10, 2000 in Docket Nos. RP99-495-004 et al. The interim rates will remain in effect pending final Commission action on the settlement in this proceeding.

Southern states that copies of the revised tariff sheets are being filed to Southern's jurisdictional customers and interested state commissions and to parties on the official service list complied by the Secretary in this proceeding.

Any person desiring to protest said filing should file a protest with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street, NE., Washington, DC 20426, in accordance with Section 385.211 of the Commission's Rules and Regulations. All such protests must be filed on or before March 27, 2000. Protests will be considered by the Commission in determining the appropriate action to be taken, but will not serve to make protestants parties to the proceedings. Copies of this filing are on file with the Commission and are available for public inspection in the Public Reference Room. This filing may be viewed on the web at <http://www.ferc.fed.us/online/rims.htm> (call 202-208-2222 for assistance).

**David P. Boergers,**  
Secretary.

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**DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY**

**Federal Energy Regulatory Commission**

[Docket Nos. ER00-188-000; ER00-213-000 and EL00-22-000]

**PSI Energy, Inc.; Cincinnati Gas & Electric Company; Notice of Informal Settlement Conference**

March 21, 2000.

Take notice that an informal settlement conference will convened in this proceeding on March 29, 2000, at 10:00 am (in a Room to be posted on the Commission's Posting Screen), and on March 30, 2000, at 10:00 am in Room 3M-3, at the offices of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street, NE., Washington, DC 20426, for the purpose of exploring the possible settlement of the above referenced docket.

Any party, as defined by 18 CFR 385.102(c), or any participant as defined in 18 CFR 385.102(b), is invited to attend. Persons wishing to become a party must move to intervene and receive intervenor status pursuant to the Commission's regulations (18 CFR 385.214).

For additional information, contact Joel Cockrell at (202) 208-1184 or Anja M. Clark at (202) 208-2034.

**David P. Boergers,**  
Secretary.

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