



Department of Energy
National Nuclear Security Administration
Washington, DC 20585

August 28, 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:

The Department of Energy (DOE) Implementation Plan (commitment 5.4.2(c)) for the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DNFSB) Recommendation 98-2, "Safety Management at the Pantex Plant," requires DOE to evaluate the program directives governing the composition and functioning of the Nuclear Explosive Safety Study Group (NESSG).

DOE Standard 3015-97, "Nuclear Explosive Safety Study Process" has been revised to reflect the recent adjustments in the NESSG composition, selection, training, and qualifications. The revised standard was released for formal review and coordination in January 2000, and numerous comments were provided by the field and the DNFSB staff. However, the numerous comments received through June 2000 also prompted significant revision, and our plan is to resubmit the revised standard for formal review and coordination.

Concurrent with these actions, DOE has completed the required biennial review of DOE 452 Series directives to incorporate lessons learned since the implementation in 1997. Based on extensive comments provided by the DNFSB staff in January and April 2000, the versions of these orders provided in December 1999 have been revised to accommodate those issues.

The directives and the standard have also been adjusted to comply with the National Nuclear Security Administration Act. Enclosed for your information are the revised DOE Orders 452.1B, "Nuclear Explosive and Weapon Surety Program," and 452.2B, "Safety of Nuclear Explosive Operations." The directives are being forwarded to the DOE Directives Management Team, MA-4, for processing under the Departmental review and comment (REVCOM) process. The DOE-STD-3015-YR, "Nuclear Explosives Safety Study Process," is being forwarded to the Assistant Secretary for Environment, Safety and Health for processing under the technical standards program.



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If you have questions, please contact me or have your staff contact Dr. Helmut Filacchione at 301-903-7519.

Sincerely,



David E. Beck
Assistant Deputy Administrator
for Military Application and
Stockpile Operations
Defense Programs

3 Enclosures:

DOE Order 452.1B

DOE Order 452.2B

DOE Standard 3015-97

cc w/enclosures:

M. Whitaker, S-3.1