

**The Secretary of Energy**

Washington, DC 20585

May 17, 2000

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DNF SAFETY BOARD

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

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Thank you for your March 7, 2000, letter supporting the Department of Energy Low Dose Radiation Research Program. This program grew out of the more than 50 years of research in the Biological and Environmental Research Program to understand the human health risks from exposure to radiation. Although this research provided much of the foundation for current radiation protection standards and policy, it was still not able to provide direct scientific evidence about the health risks of the low doses of radiation that are of current regulatory concern.

The Low Dose Radiation Research Program was started based on our belief that we could now, finally, provide this type of information for low doses of radiation because of advances in molecular biology and instrumentation, advances that often resulted from Department-supported research. The goal of this research program is to provide new scientific information that will underpin the development of future radiation protection standards and guidelines. The Low Dose Radiation Research Program web site (<http://www.lowdose.org/>) contains information on the research currently funded by the program, the 10-year program plan, links to articles about radiation that appear in the popular press, and links to a wide variety of other web sites that represent the entire spectrum of opinions and perspectives about radiation.

This program is also of great interest to Congress because of the broad financial impacts that radiation protection standards have for protecting both workers and the public and for cleaning up the environment.

I appreciate your interest in and support of this important research program

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Richardson".

Bill Richardson

