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DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

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98-0003362



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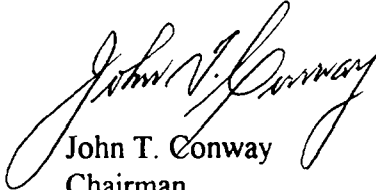
The Honorable Bill Richardson
Secretary of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20585

Dear Secretary Richardson:

Continued technical operations at the Pantex Plant are critical to the future existence of the US nuclear deterrent and to the success of the Administration's nuclear weapon dismantlement policy. For this reason the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (Board) has had a continuing interest in the safe operation of Pantex, indicated most recently by the Board's Recommendation 98-2. We are therefore particularly pleased at the report by the Board's Site Representative, that your contractor has completed dismantlement of all W-69 warheads.

The Board knows full well the painstaking effort that goes into safe dismantlement of an older weapon system like this. The completion of the W-69 dismantlement is an important milestone in the warhead dismantlement process, and we hope that the excellent accomplishment of this team of technicians will be recognized by the Department of Energy management, so that it can serve as a model to technicians in future dismantlement campaigns. Please pass on to the Amarillo Area Office, Mason and Hanger, and the dismantlement technicians involved our compliments and thanks for a job well done.

Sincerely,


John T. Conway
Chairman

c: Mr. Mark B. Whitaker, Jr.