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DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

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98-0003110



September 10, 1998

Mr. Peter N. Brush
Acting Assistant Secretary
Office of Environment, Safety and Health
U.S. Department of Energy
Washington, D.C. 20585-0119


Dear Mr. Brush:

On May 14, 1998, Deputy Secretary Elizabeth Moler signed a memorandum entitled "Fire Safety Programs." This memorandum required a response from the Department of Energy (DOE) Program Secretarial Officers, Operations Office Managers, and Field Office Managers within 60 days. The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (Board) understands that because of a delay in transmittal, the due date for responses was set by your office at August 31, 1998.

To date, the Board has received copies of responses from only three of the major sites under the Board's statutory jurisdiction: Savannah River, Oak Ridge, and Rocky Flats. The Board viewed the Deputy Secretary's memorandum as an important restatement of DOE's commitment to fire safety. In view of the July 1998 fatality at the Idaho National Environmental Engineering Laboratory (INEEL), caused by an inadvertent actuation of a fire protection system, the Board is dismayed by the apparent lack of prompt responses to this memorandum.

The Board would like to be informed, at your earliest convenience, of the status of responses from other defense nuclear facilities, particularly those from Hanford, INEEL, Los Alamos, Lawrence Livermore, Pantex, and the Nevada Test Site. Copies of the responses from these sites and all other defense nuclear facilities should be forwarded to the Board for review as soon as they are received by your office.

Sincerely,


John T. Conway
Chairman

cc: Mr. Mark B. Whitaker, Jr.