

Joyce L. Connery, Chair
Thomas A. Summers, Vice Chair
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**DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES
SAFETY BOARD**

Washington, DC 20004-2901



June 16, 2022

The Honorable Jennifer M. Granholm
Secretary of Energy
US Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585-1000

Dear Secretary Granholm:

On June 10, 2021, the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (Board) sent a letter to the Department of Energy (DOE), which included Technical Report 47, *Seismic Hazard Assessments*, that highlighted concerns with the seismic hazard assessment process at DOE sites. The Board requested a report and briefing on DOE's plans to ensure that identified safety issues do not reoccur. DOE provided its report and briefing to the Board on December 14, 2021, and April 7, 2022, respectively.

The Board appreciates DOE's response and commitments to consider the Board's concerns when revising the applicable DOE directives. However, the DOE report and briefing did not adequately clarify the expectations on timing for entry into the unreviewed safety question (USQ) process in cases where a probabilistic seismic hazard analysis (PSHA) update identifies an increased seismic hazard that exceeds qualification assumptions for seismic safety controls. Lack of clarity in DOE's safety requirements has resulted in delayed use of the USQ process, which, in turn, delays consideration of compensatory measures and DOE review. We believe these situations are thoroughly described in the Board's Technical Report 47.

Pursuant to 42 United States Code (USC) § 2286b(d), the Board requests a written response within 45 days on implementation of the USQ process following a PSHA update.

Sincerely,


Joyce L. Connery
Chair

c: Mr. Joe Olencz