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DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

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94-0005609



October 5, 1994

The Honorable Hazel R. O'Leary
Secretary of Energy
Washington, D.C. 20585

Dear Secretary O'Leary:

The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (Board) has reviewed and accepts the Department of Energy's (DOE) final deliverables for Actions 3 and 4 of Recommendation 93-1, *Standards Utilization in Defense Nuclear Facilities*, submitted to the Board on September 30, 1994.

The Board is pleased to congratulate DOE on its thorough assessment of health and safety Orders applicable to nuclear explosives operations and facilities and its comprehensive plan to correct the identified shortcomings in that set of Orders. The Board attributes this success to many people, both at DOE Headquarters, particularly the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Military Applications and Stockpile Support and his staff, and in the field, particularly Ms. Monet Harrison of the Albuquerque Operations Office. We believe that these results were achieved as the result of close cooperation between your staff and ours. This effort will hopefully set an example for continued constructive interaction between our organizations on issues of mutual concern.

The Board believes that there is still room for improvement. For example, the deliverables were provided to the Board more than three months after they were due. While quality is important, the timeliness of actions is also critical to a successful program.

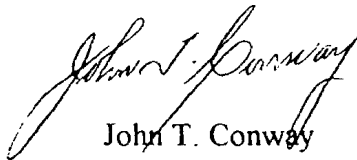
Although Actions 1 through 4 of the DOE Implementation Plan for Recommendation 93-1 have progressed in a steady and technically satisfactory manner, the same cannot be said for Action 5. Action 5 (to expedite and upgrade Order compliance self-assessments) still lacks a technically adequate plan and schedule for four of the five applicable sites a year after the September 30, 1993, commitment date. The Board is pleased to note your commitment to complete Action 5 at all five sites by May 1995.

The Board will follow with considerable interest DOE's progress in implementing these plans and integrating these actions with those for the Board's Recommendation 93-6 and DOE's corrective action plan for improving Nuclear Explosives Safety Studies. However, the management plan

described in Enclosure 2 of your letter does not appear to provide a systematic approach to integrating these actions. Also, it is unclear to the Board where senior DOE-EH and DOE-DP managers will participate in this work. Given the importance of this effort to improving public health and safety at nuclear explosives facilities (similar to the importance of the Implementation Plan for Recommendation 93-6), it appears that a similar level of senior manager involvement and direction would be advisable.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this matter further, please call me or have your staff call Mr. Steve Krahn at (202) 208-6585.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "John T. Conway".

John T. Conway
Chairman

c: The Honorable Victor H. Reis, DP-1
The Honorable Tara O'Toole, EH-1
Mr. Mark B. Whitaker, Acting EH-6