

John T. Conway, Chairman
A.J. Eggenberger, Vice Chairman
John E. Mansfield
R. Bruce Matthews

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

625 Indiana Avenue, NW, Suite 700, Washington, D.C. 20004-2901
(202) 694-7000



December 14, 2004

The Honorable Spencer Abraham
Secretary of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585-1000

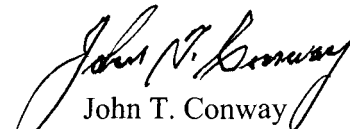
Dear Secretary Abraham:

The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (Board) issued Recommendation 2004-1, *Oversight of Complex, High-Hazard Nuclear Operations*, on May 21, 2004. On July 21, 2004, the Department of Energy (DOE) accepted Recommendation 2004-1. The enclosed technical report, DNFSB/TECH-35, *Safety Management of Complex, High-Hazard Organizations*, provides background information and ideas for implementing the Recommendation.

The report explores organizational aspects of safe operations with the intent of helping to identify how DOE could better organize itself to enhance safety, particularly nuclear safety. Academic research on organizations involved in operations with the potential for high-consequence accidents and lessons learned from major accidents and near-misses are summarized. The foundations for nuclear safety within DOE are then described, and a set of organizational attributes are proposed for safely managing operations that can lead to high-consequence, low-probability accidents. The report then describes DOE's proposed safety management changes and explains why the Board regards those changes as cause for concern. The proposed organizational attributes are applied to evaluate DOE's safety management of its high-hazard operations. Finally, suggested improvements to DOE's safety management of these operations are presented.

The ideas presented in the report are not intended to represent the only way to satisfy the Board's recommendation, but to provoke innovations and new solutions for a sustained organizational shift that should better ensure the safe management of high-hazard nuclear operations.

Sincerely,


John T. Conway
Chairman

c: The Honorable Linton Brooks
Mr. Mark B. Whitaker, Jr.

Enclosure