

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

Pursuant to the provisions of the "Government in the Sunshine Act" (5 U.S.C. § 552b), notice is hereby given of the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board's (Board) meeting, described below, regarding DOE's efforts to attract and retain scientific and technical personnel who are qualified to provide the management, direction, and guidance essential to safe operation of DOE's defense nuclear facilities.

TIME AND DATE: January 23, 1996, 9:00 a.m.

PLACE: The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board, Public Hearing Room, 625 Indiana Avenue, NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20004.

STATUS: Open.

MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED: The Board, acting pursuant to its enabling statute, issued Recommendation 93-3 designed to foster strong endorsement, involvement, and guidance by the DOE's top management in developing programs targeted at upgrading competence of the DOE's staff. The Secretary of Energy has accepted this Recommendation. The Board will hold a public meeting to review DOE's progress in developing the programs and the several initiatives needed to raise the technical competency of DOE staff.

CONTACT PERSON FOR MORE INFORMATION: Kenneth M. Pusateri, General Manager, Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board, 625 Indiana Avenue, NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20004, (800) 788-4016. This is a toll free number.

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION: The Board has a responsibility to ensure that health and safety of the public, including the workers, at DOE defense nuclear facilities are adequately protected. In doing so, the Board has looked to DOE to maintain high-quality technical expertise to deal with the potential hazards inherent in nuclear materials production, processing, and manufacturing within the DOE's defense nuclear complex. The Board's concern for the DOE's technical expertise is long standing. In several of its annual reports the Board has observed that:

" . . . the most important and far-reaching problem affecting the safety of DOE defense nuclear facilities is the difficulty in attracting and retaining personnel who are adequately qualified by technical education and experience to provide the kind of management, direction, and guidance essential to safe operation of DOE's defense nuclear facilities."

The Board's most comprehensive effort to improve DOE's technical capability at its defense nuclear facilities was expressed in Recommendation 93-3, dated June 1, 1993. In that Recommendation, the Board stated:

"Nuclear weapons development and production have progressed over the years from early efforts of a small group of highly talented, ingenious individuals in scientific laboratories to employment of thousands of workers in industrial-type production environments. While the national response to today's changing

international scene is resulting in downsizing of the nuclear stockpile and a change in mission of many of the defense nuclear facilities, the need remains for continuing vigilance to protect public and worker health and safety. In fact, a case can be made for the need for greater vigilance now throughout the weapons complex because of increased risk of equipment mishaps in aged facilities, loss of existing technical expertise through attrition and downsizing, and a reduced inclination for young engineers and scientists to get involved in the nuclear weapons field.

"Nevertheless, the level of scientific and technical expertise in the DOE of defense nuclear facilities and operations had been declining."

Recommendation 93-3, in its entirety, is on file in DOE's Public Reading Rooms, at the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board's Washington office, and on the Internet through access to the Board's electronic bulletin board at the following address: WWW.DNFSB.GOV. It is also set forth in the *Federal Register* at 58 FR 32109.

In accord with the statute establishing the Board, a public meeting will be conducted to lay the groundwork for a full assessment of the DOE's initiatives to deal with the problem of attracting and retaining technical personnel with exceptional qualifications. To assist the Board and inform the public, individual Board members will present their views,

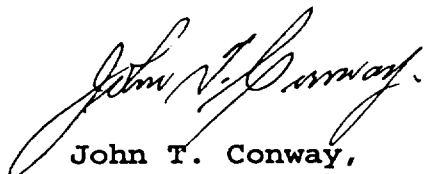
and the Board's staff will brief the Board on related topics, including, but not limited to:

1. Current level of technical expertise within selected DOE programs at defense nuclear facilities.
2. Board initiatives to identify and alleviate shortcomings in DOE technical capability.
3. DOE's use of excepted service personnel authority to acquire highly-qualified technical and scientific personnel.
4. Board staff's current assessment of the acquisition of highly-qualified DOE technical and scientific personnel and DOE's program to improve technical expertise of incumbents.

/ A transcript of this proceeding will be made available by the Board for inspection by the public at the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board's Washington office.

The Board reserves its right to further schedule and otherwise regulate the course of this meeting and hearing, to recess, reconvene, postpone or adjourn the meeting, and otherwise exercise its power under the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended.

Dated: January 11, 1996



John T. Conway,

Chairman