

June 18, 1996

The Honorable John T. Conway
Chairman
Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board
625 Indiana Avenue, NW
Suite 700
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This letter is in response to your letter of January 30, 1996 to Secretary O'Leary regarding the revision to the Manual of Functions, Assignments, and Responsibilities for Nuclear Safety (FAR Manual). As you know, the Department recently considered the needed revision to the FAR Manual in the context of the Implementation Plan for DNFSB Recommendation 95-2. In that Implementation Plan, the Department committed to submit a revised FAR Manual by September 18, 1996. Linkage with other actions in the Implementation Plan for DNFSB 95-2 ensures that Department functions and responsibilities defined in the revised FAR Manual are consistent with the integrated safety management process developed as part of the response to DNFSB 95-2.

The role, functions and responsibilities of Department line managers for safety also was a topic of discussion at the Under Secretary's June 14-15, 1996 meeting between Department Senior Managers and Members and staff of the Defense Board. It was decided at the meeting that the Department would issue a Policy Statement on this subject as part of the FAR Manual deliverable. This Policy Statement will be provided to the Defense Board for review at the next Quarterly Meeting of the Secretary and the Defense Board, currently scheduled for mid-August.

The Department formed a FAR Manual Working and Steering Group chaired by the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Nuclear and Facility Safety. These groups have prepared a draft, conceptual FAR Manual which was provided to the Defense Board staff on February 23, 1996 for comment. Further revisions to the February 23rd draft are in progress to reflect ongoing activities with the Implementation Plan for 95-2, the development of new directives, and Department strategic alignment initiatives.

We will keep the Board informed of the work in progress and obtain Board input to further drafts as they are developed.

Sincerely,

Tara O'Toole, M.D., M.P.H.
Assistant Secretary
Environment, Safety and Health

cc: Mark Whitaker, S.3