

Peter S. Winokur, Chairman
Jessie H. Roberson, Vice Chairman
John E. Mansfield
Joseph F. Bader

**DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES
SAFETY BOARD**

Washington, DC 20004-2901



March 2, 2012

The Honorable Steven Chu
Secretary of Energy
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585-1000

Dear Secretary Chu:

The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (Board) has received your letter dated December 27, 2011, enclosing the Department of Energy's (DOE) Implementation Plan for the Board's Recommendation 2011-1, *Safety Culture at the Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant* (WTP). The Board has reviewed the Implementation Plan and determined that it is an acceptable response to the Recommendation.

Consistent with the Implementation Plan and in parallel with its development, DOE's Office of Health, Safety and Security (HSS) independently reviewed the WTP safety culture (*Independent Oversight Assessment of Nuclear Safety Culture and Management of Nuclear Safety Concerns at the Hanford Site Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant*, January 2012). The HSS report describes the issues and underlying causes at WTP in considerable breadth and depth. The Board requests that DOE update the Implementation Plan using information gained from the HSS report and any further actions where needed. The Board requests that DOE provide an updated Implementation Plan by April 30, 2012.

The HSS findings underscore the need for independent viewpoints and specialized expertise in safety culture assessments. The extent-of-condition review specified in the Implementation Plan includes HSS evaluations at five design and construction projects, but uses self-assessments to determine whether any other independent reviews are needed. The Board

cautions that DOE must be prepared to perform a broader suite of independent reviews if self-assessments do not prove to be a reliable indicator of safety culture status.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter S. Winokur". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Peter S. Winokur, Ph.D.
Chairman

c: The Honorable Thomas P. D'Agostino
Mr. David Huizenga
Mr. Glenn S. Podonsky
Mrs. Mari-Jo Campagnone