



Department of Energy
National Nuclear Security Administration
Washington, DC 20585

March 23, 2005

OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

The Honorable John T. Conway
Chairman
Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board
625 Indiana Avenue, N.W.
Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This is in response to your September 27, 2004, letter. Your letter noted fundamental weaknesses in the implementation of nuclear safety requirements for a nuclear facility located at Sandia National Laboratories, New Mexico (SNL-NM), and that the approved safety basis does not provide assurance that the operational hazards have been adequately analyzed and controlled. Specifically, you requested a report and briefing within 90 days that would address the following areas:

- The adequacy of safety bases for each currently operational nuclear facility at SNL-NM.
- Actions to be taken to ensure more effective closure of comments from future safety basis review teams.
- Actions to be taken to ensure that adequate draft safety bases are submitted by the SNL-NM contractor in the future.

The Sandia Site Office and SNL management briefed the Board on January 24, 2005. Enclosed is a March 1, 2005, memorandum from the Sandia Site Office Manager transmitting relevant action plans for the Sandia Site Office and SNL. NNSA Headquarters will continue to work with the Sandia Site Office and SNL to ensure actions are implemented to improve the safety basis development, review and approval process for Sandia nuclear facilities.

Sincerely,

Linton F. Brooks
Administrator

Enclosure

cc: M. Whitaker, DR-1

- 1. The Path Ahead to Improve the Nuclear Safety Basis Process at Sandia National Laboratories (SNL)**
- 2. SSO Corrective Action Plan - Safety Bases for SNL Nuclear Facilities**

