

John T. Conway, Chairman
A.J. Eggenberger, Vice Chairman
John W. Crawford, Jr.
Joseph J. DiNunno
Herbert John Cecil Kouts

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

625 Indiana Avenue, NW, Suite 700, Washington, D.C. 20004
(202) 208-6400



October 21, 1997

The Honorable Federico F. Peña
Secretary of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20585-1000

Dear Secretary Peña:

The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (Board) has reviewed the Department of Energy's (DOE) Implementation Plan for Board Recommendation 97-1, *Safe Storage of Uranium-233*, dated September 29, 1997.

The Board is encouraged by the numerous activities under way to address the characterization of existing uranium-233 materials at the major DOE sites. As the Board noted in the subject recommendation, uncertainty as to the condition of many items of stored U-233 has generated potential safety concerns. Hence, it is important to assess both the adequacy of the packaging of the items of U-233 as they are presently stored and the state of the storage facilities, and correct any safety problems found. The Board is especially interested in the development of a sound storage standard for U-233.

The Board accepts the submitted Implementation Plan for Recommendation 97-1. However, the Board is pessimistic that this plan can be pursued effectively in the absence of a single line manager responsible for all operations under the plan, with corresponding authority and control of the finances committed to this program. As discussed in our letter of June 10, 1997, the Board strongly believes that such an organizational structure is needed if the proposed plan is to be successfully implemented.

Sincerely,

John T. Conway
Chairman

c: Mr. Mark B. Whitaker, Jr.