

[DOE LETTERHEAD]

September 3, 1996

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:

The Implementation Plan for Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board Recommendation 93-2 requires a quarterly status report. Enclosed is the Department of Energy's quarterly status report ending June 30, 1996.

I am pleased to also report that subsequent to June 30, after a series of meetings called by the Under Secretary, senior Department of Energy program officials agreed to support a substantial increase in funding for nuclear criticality predictability capability activities for Fiscal Year 1997. The Department is presently institutionalizing the management and financial support for these activities.

Sincerely,

Victor Stello, Jr.
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Safety and Quality
Defense Programs

Enclosure

cc:
Mark Whitaker, S-3. 1, w/encl.

**QUARTERLY STATUS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
FOR
DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD RECOMMENDATION 93-2
THIRD QUARTER, FISCAL YEAR 1996**

During the third quarter of Fiscal Year 1996, the Nuclear Criticality Experiments Steering Committee (NCESC), as delineated in the Implementation Plan for the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board Recommendation 93-2, focused on responding to issues and questions raised by the affected Program Offices regarding the need to maintain a viable nuclear criticality predictability capability within the Department. Specific accomplishments during this period of time are as follows:

- The NCECSC Co-Chairmen (both from the Office of Defense Programs) conducted briefings for the Principle Deputy Assistant Secretaries (or their representatives) from the Offices of Defense Programs; Environmental Management; Environment, Safety and Health; Energy Research; Nuclear Energy; and Human Resources on its report entitled, "The Department of Energy Nuclear Criticality Predictability Program," dated January 17, 1996. At the briefings, each office agreed that maintaining a viable nuclear criticality predictability capability was absolutely essential.
- One hands-on nuclear criticality safety course was conducted at the Los Alamos Critical Experiments Facility in April 1996. Two courses are scheduled for July 1996, and one course is scheduled for September 1996, for a total of four classes in Fiscal Year 1996.

The NCECSC continues to make progress in addressing the key issues concerning the Department's nuclear criticality predictability capability. The focus of the Committee in the next quarter will be to resolve the short-term funding situation and begin long-term resolution. In addition, the NCECSC will use the technical subcommittees to continue assessing and prioritizing needs from the nuclear criticality predictability community.