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DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

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March 14, 1996

The Honorable Hazel R. O'Leary
Secretary of Energy
Washington, D.C. 20585-1000

Dear Secretary O'Leary:

In late 1993, the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (Board) issued Recommendation 93-6, *Maintaining Access to Nuclear Weapons Expertise in the Defense Nuclear Complex*. An Implementation Plan for this Board Recommendation was submitted by the Department of Energy (DOE) in July 1994 and accepted by the Board in August 1994. In response to concerns about lack of progress in actual implementation, as expressed in a Board letter dated April 5, 1995, DOE committed to prepare a revised Implementation Plan.

The revised Implementation Plan for Recommendation 93-6 was received by the Board on February 13, 1996, and has been reviewed. The implementation actions proposed, in combination with the actions already completed under the original Plan, conform to the standards set forth in the Board's Policy Statement No. 1, *Criteria for Judging the Adequacy of DOE's Responses and Implementation Plans for Board Recommendations* (55 Fed. Reg. 43398). The Board, therefore, accepts the revised Implementation Plan for Recommendation 93-6, as submitted.

In its April 5, 1995, letter the Board noted that surveillance programs need to include a focus on derivation of hazard information that would be used in weapon dismantlement and modification procedure development. This issue has not been resolved in subsequent correspondence from DOE. Based on discussions between the Board's staff and DOE Headquarter's staff, the Board understands that DOE intends to conduct a review of the surveillance programs regarding their adequacy in providing hazard information useful to dismantlement and modification activities. The Board would like to be informed of the results of that review including any planned improvements.

The Board notes that work under the revised Implementation Plan has actually been underway during the lengthy internal DOE coordination process and that some deliverables have already been provided. This pro-active approach is to be commended since the concerns that led to issuance of Recommendation 93-6 have been exacerbated by the long delay in achieving full implementation. In particular, the Board believes that the Nevada Operations Office personnel involved in Recommendation 93-6 implementation should be commended for their high degree of independent initiative.

The Board will continue to pay close attention to DOE's efforts to implement this important Recommendation. If your staff has any questions with respect to the implementation of Recommendation 93-6, please refer them to Ms. Jan Preston at (202) 208-6562.

Sincerely,



John T. Conway
Chairman

c: The Honorable Victor H. Reis
Mr. Donald W. Pearman
Mr. Mark B. Whitaker
Mr. Terry A. Vaeth