

**[DNFSB LETTERHEAD]**

March 14, 1997

The Honorable Victor H. Reis  
Assistant Secretary for Defense Programs  
Department of Energy  
1000 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20585-0104

Dear Dr. Reis:

The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (Board) has been following the Department of Energy's (DOE) progress toward resolution of the Unreviewed Safety Question (USQ) concerning radiography operations at the Pantex Plant. As a result of this USQ, radiography operations involving nuclear explosives were suspended in December 1996. The Board understands that DOE is now preparing to resume these radiography operations.

The Board requests that DOE brief the Board on the safety-related issues associated with the restart of radiography operations at Pantex, prior to resumption of such operations. We would like to discuss the issue that initiated the USQ and suspension of radiography, the resolution of any safety-related issues, and the readiness of the facilities and operations to resume. If you have any questions, please give me a call.

Sincerely,

***John T. Conway***  
Chairman

c: Mark B. Whitaker, Jr.