



**The Secretary of Energy**

Washington, DC 20585

December 30, 1997

Mr. John T. Conway  
Chairman  
Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board  
625 Indiana Avenue, NW., Suite 700  
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Mr. Conway:

In my September 8, 1997, response to your letter of August 8, 1997, I anticipated that, by the end of this year, we would complete the formulation of, and have in practice, procedures at the Pantex Plant assuring that the hazards of operations and the relative capabilities of facilities are factored into decisions on facility use. At a December 23, 1997, status review with your staff, it was apparent that more time is needed to complete this effort. By the end of February 1998, I should be able to report the completion of this to you. In the meantime, we will keep your staff informed and involved.

If you have questions, please contact me or have your staff contact Mr. Edward Cassidy of my staff at 301-903-7559.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gene Ives".

Gene Ives  
Deputy Assistant Secretary  
for Military Application and  
Stockpile Management  
Defense Programs

cc:

M. Whitaker, S-3.1  
K. Carlson, AL  
C. Mangeng, LANL  
M. Anastasio, LLNL  
R. Hagenruber, SNL