



**The Under Secretary of Energy**  
Washington, DC 20585

February 8, 1999

The Honorable John T. Conway  
Chairman  
Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board  
625 Indiana Avenue, NW  
Suite 700  
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This is in response to your December 14, 1998, letter discussing your review of the Department of Energy's (DOE) draft standard DOE-SAFT-0067, *Criteria for Packaging and Storing Uranium-233-Bearing Materials*.

The Department has carefully considered the Board's comments on the standard and is working to resolve outstanding issues where practical. However, the resolution of some issues will require additional data from laboratory tests and an analysis of actual storage conditions. We have released DOE-SAFT-0067 on an interim use basis and will reopen the review and comment period before finalizing the standard. This will allow existing storage sites, such as Oak Ridge National Laboratory and Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory, to proceed with gathering characterization and inspection data. This information, along with data from laboratory tests, then can be used to validate the existing technical basis for the standard or provide empirical evidence that would necessitate any changes to the standard's criteria. We will describe the inspection program and laboratory testing program activities in more detail in the Program Execution Plan.

The issues and comments addressed by your letter will be resolved before the standard is issued in final form. Several comments from your letter have already been addressed in the current version of the standard dated December 1998. A copy has been provided to the Board staff.

I fully support the Department's technical experts in continuing to work closely with the Board's staff to expedite resolution of outstanding issues and develop a final standard for the safe storage of uranium-233. Discussions were held with

your staff on January 12, 1999, to address these issues, and a briefing was held on the status of the standard on January 27, 1999. If you have further questions, please contact me or have your staff contact Mr. John C. Tseng at (301) 903-4482.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ernest J. Moniz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "E" and "M".

Ernest J. Moniz