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DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

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December 14, 2000

The Honorable Bill Richardson
Secretary of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585-1000

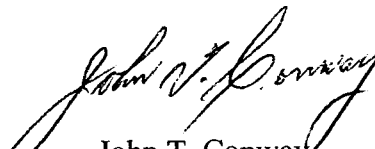
Dear Secretary Richardson:

The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (Board) has received the Department of Energy's (DOE) Implementation Plan for Recommendation 2000-2, *Configuration Management, Vital Safety Systems*. The Board's recommendation stressed the need to maintain and manage the reliability and operability of vital safety systems. The commitments and path forward outlined in the Implementation Plan adequately address the issues raised in Recommendation 2000-2. The Board therefore accepts the proposed Implementation Plan. Acceptance is predicated on the assumption that adequate funding will be provided to execute the commitments therein.

While the plan sets forth a reasonable path forward, the Board notes that the start of the implementation effort has not been auspicious. Four actions that were to have been completed in November (commitment # 1, 2, 14, and 26) were not finished as scheduled, and the executive team that was to be established to guide this effort is not yet functioning. Clear guidance to field and contractor line personnel as to expectations for the systems survey has yet to be formally issued.

Based on these observations, the Board believes the implementation of Recommendation 2000-2 requires additional senior management attention.

Sincerely,


John T. Conway
Chairman

c: Mr. Mark B. Whitaker, Jr.
Mr. Steven Carey