



The Secretary of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

January 8, 2003

The Honorable John T. Conway
Chairman
Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board
625 Indiana Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Mr. Chairman:

On October 3, 2002, the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (Board) issued recommendation 2002-2, *Weapons Laboratory Support of the Defense Nuclear Complex*. The Department agrees that providing the defense nuclear complex with appropriate support is an essential priority. We also recognize that "one-size-fits-all" organizational structures and systems are not appropriate for our weapons laboratories.

The Department accepts recommendation 2002-2 and will develop an implementation plan to accomplish the following:

- We will re-emphasize the policy that the nuclear weapons program is the top priority among all activities at the weapons laboratories.
- Each weapons laboratory will review its existing processes for assigning individuals as the senior point of contact for each weapons system and ensure that selection criteria, training and mentoring, and succession planning are in place. Personnel management is an internal process of the weapons laboratories and should not be prescribed by the Department. However, the Department will ensure that the end result is that senior technically competent individuals are assigned as the point of contact for each weapons system. A list of senior individuals assigned as the point of contact of each weapon system will be provided.
- Each weapons laboratory will review its existing management system and demonstrate that through the appropriate alignment of a combination of internal organizational structure, programs, and procedures that the roles and responsibilities of each weapons point of contact are clearly defined. The point of contact for each weapon will be empowered to direct appropriate resources to ensure the safety of operations in the nuclear weapons complex within his/her assigned weapon system or have direct access to the management authority to acquire the necessary support.



- The Department will establish and staff a Federal function at each site office managing a weapons laboratory contract to ensure that the laboratory support requirements related to safety of operations of the defense nuclear weapons complex are being tracked and met. For this function, the National Nuclear Security Administration reengineering will clarify the roles and responsibilities and the contractual lines of authority for providing direction and resolving competing requirements for resources.

I have designated Ms. Karen Boardman as the responsible manager for developing the Department's implementation plan for this recommendation. Ms. Boardman may be reached at (505) 845-6039.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Spencer Abraham". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "S".

Spencer Abraham