



Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

July 3, 2012

The Honorable Peter S. Winokur
Chairman
Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board
625 Indiana Avenue, NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The purpose of this letter is to update you on commitments seven and eight in the Department of Energy's (DOE) *Implementation Plan to Improve Oversight of Nuclear Operations*, updated July 2011, developed in response to Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DNFSB) Recommendation 2004-1, *Oversight of Complex, High-Hazard Nuclear Operations*.

Since August 2011, the Office of Nuclear Safety, within the Office of Health, Safety and Security (HSS) has led the Department's efforts to establish a corporate Nuclear Safety Research and Development (NSR&D) Program, and has formed a DOE NSR&D Committee, developed a NSR&D operating plan, and began development of a database of current NSR&D projects. The NSR&D Committee has met several times over the last three months to complete development of the Committee charter and NSR&D operating plan and began to identify Departmental NSR&D activities, budgets, and needs.

The Committee expects to complete its analysis of DOE NSR&D activities and budgets by September 30, which will complete commitment seven of DNFSB Recommendation 2004-1. This will allow time to effectively coordinate with DOE program offices on this activity. As identified in our Implementation Plan, commitment eight will be completed 12 months from the completion of commitment seven. In addition, given the Deputy Secretary's key role on DNFSB-related actions, we are revising commitments seven and eight to report on the establishment of the NSR&D Program to the Deputy Secretary.

We appreciate the useful feedback the DNFSB staff has provided as we have been working to establish DOE's NSR&D Program and look forward to continued interactions with the DNFSB on this effort. If you have any questions or need further information, please contact me at (202) 287-6071, or Dr. James O'Brien, Director, Office of Nuclear Safety, at (301) 903-1408.

Sincerely,

Glenn S. Podonsky
Chief Health, Safety and Security Officer
Office of Health, Safety and Security

