



The Deputy Secretary of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

May 17, 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 Department of Energy's (DOE) mission relies upon well-developed and consistently implemented work planning and control programs to perform work safely and effectively. Over the past few years the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (Board) staff has worked closely with DOE to improve work planning and control (WP&C) at DOE defense nuclear facilities. These reviews have revealed some areas that need improvement. The purpose of this letter is to underscore the Department's commitment and actions to improve and seek excellence in this area.

The Department has sought to improve work planning and control programs and their implementation, largely through a vertically integrated approach (program-by-program, site-by-site). Much of that effort is guided by the Department's implementation of Integrated Safety Management and related safety directives and regulations; responses to Board Recommendation 2004-1, *Oversight of Complex, High-Hazard Nuclear Operations*; and subsequent Board letters directed at WP&C program performance at individual DOE sites. Since the issues encompass multiple sites, contractors, and program offices, the solutions must span various parts of DOE as well. While the Department has responded directly to the issues raised regarding particular facilities or sites, individual responses do not constitute the whole of the Department's efforts in this area. Senior DOE Management must draw from those tailored approaches and integrate them into a complex-wide solution.

In 2011, the Department's Strategic Plan set a goal to establish a framework that combines the wisdom of Department employees, contractors, and stakeholders to maximize reliable mission performance. The Department recognizes that improvement requires a concerted effort to apply past lessons to current and future challenges in order to achieve excellence in WP&C, and to welcome contributions from outside the Department to that end. In that spirit, the Department acknowledges the efforts by the Energy Facility Contractors Group (EFCOG) to develop a DOE-specific and state-of-the-art Work Planning and Control



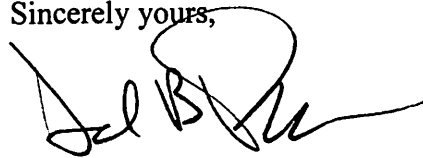
Program Guideline document for consideration by the Department. We understand that the design of the document framework is based on industry benchmarks, Federal regulations, and DOE requirements and guidance.

Substantive interaction among the operations, maintenance, construction, decontamination and decommissioning, and laboratory research and development communities over the last months has helped define and address some core issues affecting the implementation of robust WP&C programs.

The Department is committed to addressing any identified weaknesses and improvements in process integration, implementation, corporate lessons learned across the DOE complex, and federal oversight. We will only succeed through teamwork and continuous improvement.

We look forward to working with the DNFSB and remain prepared to brief you and your staff on the status of current WP&C efforts.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Daniel B. Poneman', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Daniel B. Poneman

cc: M. Williams, ADS
T. D'Agostino, NA-1
D. Huizenga, EM-1
D. Cook, NA-10
G. Podonsky, HS-1
M. J. Campagnone, HS-1.1
P. Lyons, NE-1
G. Woods, GC-1
W.F. Brinkman, SC-1