



Department of Energy
National Nuclear Security Administration
Washington, DC 20585

February 4, 2003

The Honorable John T. Conway
Chairman
Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board
625 Indiana Avenue, N.W.
Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The Implementation Plan for Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board Recommendation 97-2, *Criticality Safety*, requires quarterly status reports. Enclosed is the Department of Energy's quarterly status report for the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2003.

The Implementation Plan contains 30 milestones, all of which have now been completed. Although all commitments have been met, stability of funding for the Nuclear Criticality Safety Program has been an ongoing concern. With the Secretary's decision for Defense Program to fully fund and manage the Nuclear Criticality Safety Program (NCSP) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2003 and beyond, stability of funding should be achieved. Although the continuing resolution has limited budget allocations to FY 2002 levels, I remain committed to providing adequate funding for the program once Congress approves a final FY 2003 budget. The FY 2004 budget request has been adjusted to provide sufficient funding to meet NCSP requirements.

The NCSP continues to sustain progress in all of the program task areas as reflected in the body of the enclosed report. In addition, I want to inform you about our completion of a Technical Report # 29, *Criticality Safety*, commitment that was made in a Secretarial letter to you on

May 30, 2001:

"The Department will promulgate the Deputy Secretary's self-assessment criteria as a DOE Standard. Additional criteria will be added to address needs cited in Sections 3.b and 3.c above, and to address needs cited in Sections 5 and 8 below." [Section 3.b of the Enclosure to the Secretarial letter affirmed the preference for engineered controls over administrative controls; Section 3.c affirmed the need for performance metrics and the need to periodically assess engineered controls; Section 5 affirmed the need to establish a robust process for vertically tracing criticality controls; and Section 8 affirmed the need to formalize a common framework for contractor criticality safety self-assessment programs.]



Dr. Jerry McKamy transformed the Deputy Secretary's self assessment criteria into DOE-STD-1158-2002, *Self-Assessment Standard for DOE Contractor Criticality Safety Programs*, which was published in November 2002. This new standard addresses all items cited in the commitment (above). Your staff participated in the review process and their comments were included in the final version of the Standard. With completion of this action, all Technical Report #29 commitments have been met.

If you have any questions, please contact me directly or have your staff contact Mike Thompson at 301-903-5648.

Sincerely,



David H. Crandall
Assistant Deputy Administrator
for Research, Development, and Simulation
Defense Programs

Enclosure

cc (w/encl):
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