



Department of Energy
National Nuclear Security Administration
Washington, DC 20585

October 9, 2003

The Honorable John T. Conway
Chairman
Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board
625 Indiana Avenue, NW.
Suite 700
Washington, DC 20004-2901

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This letter is the National Nuclear Security Administration's (NNSA) response to your letter dated July 9, 2003, which requested, "NNSA's plans and schedules for addressing or rejecting the recommendations made by the Senior Technical Advisory Panel during the past 3 years, and to institutionalize the separation in time for the NESS and readiness reviews."

The NNSA provided an interim reply on September 10, 2003, which discussed an independent review that Mr. Gene Ives was conducting for the Administration with regard to the utilization of the Senior Technical Advisory Panel (STAP). Additionally, we stated we would evaluate your concerns regarding previous STAP recommendations in our response.

We received Mr. Ives' draft Executive Summary October 3, 2003, which we will share with your staff. We intend to implement those recommendations we believe will allow us to best utilize the STAP expertise now, and in the future, to update and improve the Nuclear Explosive Safety Study (NESS) process. The STAP is an invaluable resource which can only make a good process better. We will work with the STAP to refine our guidance to them and enhance our interaction with them.



Our response to the recommendations made by the STAP is enclosed. This enclosure also includes the response to your concern about separating the NESS and readiness reviews. That response is at section D in the enclosure.

Sincerely,



David E. Beck
Assistant Deputy Administrator
for Military Application
and Stockpile Operations
Defense Programs

Enclosure

cc:

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