



The Secretary of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

June 4, 2003

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

Dear Mr. Chairman:

We are pleased to forward the enclosed Implementation Plan (Plan) for Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board's (Board) Recommendation 2002-2, *Department of Energy Plan to Address and Resolve Weapons Laboratory Support of the Defense Nuclear Complex*.

This Plan addresses the Department's need to re-emphasize the policy that the nuclear weapons program is the top priority among all activities at the weapons laboratories -- Los Alamos National Laboratory, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, and Sandia National Laboratories (Laboratories); identify senior weapons point of contact at each laboratory and their responsibilities; and identify a Federal function at each site office managing a weapons laboratory contract to ensure that requirements related to safety of operations of the defense nuclear weapons complex are being tracked and met. Specifically, the Department is taking the following actions to address its needs:

- The Secretary will re-emphasize that the nuclear weapons program work is his highest priority and that it takes precedence over work done for others by the Laboratories except as specified by the Homeland Security Act, which states that pursuant to arrangements entered into by the Secretary of Energy and the Secretary of Homeland Security: "Notwithstanding any other law governing the administration, mission, use or operations of any of the Department of Energy national laboratories and sites, such laboratories and sites are authorized to accept and perform work for the Secretary [of Homeland Security] consistent with the resources provided, and perform such work on an equal basis to other missions at the laboratory and not on a non-interference basis with other missions of such laboratory or site." Pub. L. 107-296, § 309(a)(2). Accordingly, the Department will update its current policy to communicate the Secretary's priority for the nuclear weapons program.

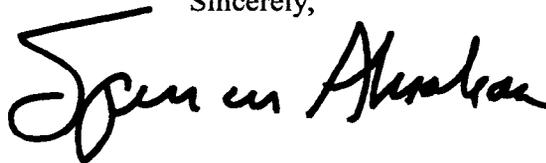


- The Laboratories will review and revise the process for ensuring a single point of contact is clearly identified for each weapon system. This information will be disseminated to the appropriate personnel in the weapons complex. Additionally, NNSA will request that the Laboratories review their existing processes for weapons point of contact selection, training and mentoring, and succession planning for continuous improvement. The Laboratories will certify to NNSA these processes are in place and will describe any plans for process improvement.
- NNSA will ensure that the Laboratories provide a deliverable to NNSA describing: basic qualifications and detailed roles, responsibilities and authorities of the weapons points of contact; the organization/systems in place for providing point of contact resources; how empowerment, resolution of emergent safety issues, and prioritization are accomplished; and the process of communicating point of contact roles and responsibilities within the Laboratories. NNSA will also ask the Laboratories to identify and implement any process improvements deemed necessary.
- NNSA will ensure the contracting officer at the DOE site office will appoint a designee for overseeing work of the laboratory at the defense nuclear weapons sites. This person will ensure laboratory support requirements related to safety of operations of the defense nuclear weapons complex are tracked and met within the current resources on the contract. Additionally, the Standing Management Team charter will be revised reflecting the new business approach to the lab contract management.

I have assigned Mr. Martin Schoenbauer, Office of Nuclear Weapons Stockpile, as my Responsible Manager for executing this Plan. Mr. Schoenbauer can be reached at (301) 903-3489.

We appreciate the advice and support provided by the Board and its staff during the development of this Plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Spencer Abraham". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Spencer Abraham

Enclosure