February 16, 2000

Mr. Theodore Wyka, Jr.
Director, Safety Management Implementation Team
Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20285-0104

Dear Mr. Wyka:

Based on the presentations and material submitted for the public record at the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board's (Board) public meeting on January 20, 2000, the Board has developed the enclosed questions in areas that it would like additional information or clarification. Therefore, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 2286b(d), the Board requests a report from the Department of Energy within 30 days of receipt of this letter, providing responses to these questions. The responses will be placed in the public meeting record.

If you have any questions on this matter please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

John T. Conway
Chairman

c: Mr. Mark B. Whitaker, Jr.

Enclosure

Additional Questions from the January 20, 2000 Public Meeting

Recommendation 95-2

Facility Status

- The Integrated Safety Management (ISM) Implementation Milestone Completion Status does not track ISM implementation for federal responsibilities. What is the status of ISM implementation for Department of Energy (DOE) offices?

- The Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) has elected not to perform verification reviews for its facilities including Building 3019. Explain why ORNL has elected not to follow the requirement to use the "Grumbly Protocol" for ISM verification reviews. Have any other sites not used this protocol?

Performance Indicators

- All of the ISM effectiveness performance measures predate the ISM program and have been collected for several years under the DOE ES&H Performance Indicator program. Which of these proposed performance measures is geared to measuring the unique aspects of ISM that have been instituted in the recent past, and what is that measure intended to show? What is different from before? Are any changes being made to ISM based on any performance measure results you may have?

- DOE Acquisition Regulations "Conditional Payment of Fee" clause also requires performance measures for contracting purposes. Does the draft guidance, recently sent out for comment, give contracting officers guidance on how they should use ISM performance measures in setting award fees? What is the schedule for issuing this guidance and how does DOE anticipate contracting officers will implement this guidance in a way that ensures consistency?

- Who is coordinating development of site ISM performance measures with cognizant contracting officers to ensure that the measures are useful for feedback and improvement purposes and payment of award fees?

- Who is ensuring that site-level ISM performance measures are consistent from site to site across the defense nuclear complex, given differences in hazard and mission?

Additional Questions from the January 20, 2000 Public Meeting

Site Briefings

Idaho

- It appears that Idaho has made significant progress over the last year in implementing ISM—to what do you attribute this success? How and to what extent has Idaho shared lessons learned? What problems have been encountered? How have these problems been overcome?

- ISM implementation at the Idaho Nuclear Technology and Engineering Center (INTEC), one of Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory's most complex sites, is still ongoing with the Phase II verification scheduled for February. What are the largest impediments to ISM implementation at INTEC and what is being done to address them?

- On January 11, 2000 the Board sent a letter to the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory (INEEL) regarding the implementation of Integrated Safety Management Systems at the activity level. What actions are being taken by INEEL regarding this letter?

Albuquerque

- The Pantex schedule for ISM implementation continues to slip to the right. Can you explain why ISM implementation at Pantex has been so difficult and what is being done to meet the Secretary's September 2000 implementation goal?

- What is the Albuquerque DOE Office doing to implement the federal responsibilities for ISM?

- According to the presenter at the public meeting, Albuquerque is developing its own ISM description that will provide a vision of where the Albuquerque Office wants its ISM program to be. However, ISM descriptions are normally not vision statement documents, but rather a description of the existing ISM program and the mechanisms that make up the program. Please elaborate on the structure of the Albuquerque document and how it will address the interfaces with its area offices and the Functions Responsibilities and Authorities document.

- What specific aspects of the request for proposal for the recompetition of the Pantex contract are intended to ensure progress toward the objectives of ISM and Recommendation 98-2 are sustained after the new contract is awarded? How, specifically, does DOE expect these provisions to work?

Additional Questions from the January 20, 2000 Public Meeting

Recommendation 98-1

- The 98-1 Implementation Plan states "The initial focus of this process will be the management of safety issues and corrective actions resulting from Office of Oversight assessments. However, consistent with the June 3, 1998, feedback and improvement plan of action, it may be beneficial to expand this process at some point to address other assessment issues . . . ." What is being done to look at expanding this process to deal with other safety significant issues?

- At the February 3, 1999, Recommendation 95-2 public meeting the Board was told that tracking systems to deal with non-DOE EH-2 identified issues were being worked in conjunction with the tracking system designed to meet 98-1 commitments. Although the Corrective Action Tracking System (CATS) has been developed to track EH-2 issues, what is being done with the other systems, including the DOE Field Office tracking systems?

- What organization has been assigned the responsibility to monitor and report to the proper authority the performance of the CATS system on timely (a) entry of issues identified by EH-2 which require Corrective Action Plans (CAPs) and (b) development of the CAPs and entry of the corrective actions.

- Approval of the CAP for the Emergency Management oversight review is 17 months overdue. What has led to this delay? In October 1998, EH-2 issued a report on Site Safety Performance accompanied by 18 topical area reports on a wide range of topics covering areas in which DOE is still encountering operational problems. These reports have not yet found their way into the CATS. What is the basis for this long delay? Based on these delays, is there a need to modify the 98-1 process to ease the approval process for CAPs affecting multiple Program Secretarial Officers (PSOs)?

- For issues that involve multiple PSOs, what is the process used to decide which PSO is the lead and how the issue will be assigned once it is entered into CATS?

- Describe the nature and source of guidance for the various kinds of reports now being produced for the different levels of management in both the field and headquarters for monitoring performance in completing identified actions.

- Describe how the current CATS is being used by the Field Managers, PSOs, and the Deputy Secretary to monitor performance in developing CAPS and in completion of the indicated actions.

- Describe the level of acceptance and the use of the CATS across the DOE complex by various levels of management.

Additional Questions from the January 20, 2000 Public Meeting

98-1 Implementation Verification Plan

- Describe how the Team proposes to verify that the DOE system is effectively addressing those safety issues that cut across multiple sites and multiple PSO programs identified by Independent Oversight.

- The Office of Oversight (EH-2) plays a critical role after issues have been identified, in entering the issues in the CATS, and reviewing corrective action plans in a timely manner. Describe how the Team is looking at those elements as part of implementation verification?

Additional Questions from the January 20, 2000 Public Meeting

Lessons Learned

- Although the Board is aware that there are more than 30 DOE directives that call for using lessons learned to improve operations, is there a DOE policy that describes the structure for the overall program?

- Describe the operations of the Lessons Learned Program, how it is coordinated, how it is monitored for effectiveness in dissemination and use of all parts of the database by all sites.

- Describe the analyses and by whom they are carried out for all Lessons Learned in the Complex.

- How does DOE Headquarters measure the effectiveness of the Lessons Learned program on the individual sites and across the complex? In what office is this responsibility placed?

- Have any surveys been taken to evaluate the user friendliness of the software being used to collect, analyze, and make accessible the information in the database?

- Is there any program in place to determine the value of Lessons Learned in other relevant industrial situations or other government agencies? Are mechanisms in place for exchange of Lessons Learned with these agencies? Describe the nature and current status of such programs if they exist.

- Independent Oversight has developed reports on the status of DOE's activities in at least 21 different and vital topical areas such as fire protection, radiation protection, etc. What steps have been taken to relate the application of Lessons Learned in these different areas to ensure the same mistakes are not repeated in safety and operations? Where is this effort centered? What are the results of such efforts?