

June 7, 2001

The Honorable Spencer Abraham
Secretary of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20585-1000

Dear Secretary Abraham:

The Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site (RFETS) is preparing to stabilize and package its plutonium metal and oxide materials in the Plutonium Stabilization and Packaging System (PuSPS) in Building 371. In accordance with Section 3133(a) of Public Law 102-190 (105 Stat. 1574-5), the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (Board) must issue a determination that the Secretary's response to relevant Board recommendations is adequate to protect the public health and safety before plutonium operations resume.

The Board has reviewed the RFETS preparations for PuSPS operations and the Operational Readiness Reviews performed by the contractor and the Department of Energy's (DOE) field office. In performing these reviews, the Board applied the tenets of Recommendation 95-2, *Integrated Safety Management*, including identification of the scope of work, identification of hazards and appropriate controls, and evaluation of the readiness of the operators to conduct the work safely. Based on these reviews, the Board has determined that DOE's response to the Board's Recommendations 90-2, *Codes and Standards*, 90-5, *Rocky Flats Systematic Evaluations Program*, and 91-1, *Safety Standards Program*, as well as other actions taken at RFETS, are adequate to protect the public health and safety with respect to the startup of the PuSPS in Building 371.

The Board believes that stabilization and packaging activities in the PuSPS can proceed safely at this time and that no additional Board action is necessary prior to operation of the PuSPS in Building 371. The Board will continue its oversight of RFETS stabilization and packaging activities.

Sincerely,

John T. Conway
Chairman

c: The Honorable Carolyn L. Huntoon
The Honorable Ben Nighthorse Campbell
The Honorable Wayne Allard
The Honorable Mark Udall
Ms. Barbara A. Mazurowski
Mr. Mark B. Whitaker, Jr.