

April 19, 2002

General John A. Gordon
Under Secretary for Nuclear Security and Administrator
of the National Nuclear Security Administration
U. S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585-0701

Dear General Gordon:

The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (Board) shares an objective with the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) to ensure that the important mission of NNSA is achieved safely. This objective requires that NNSA resources be allocated effectively and that line management flexibility and creativity be balanced with safety, security, financial, and other requirements.

The Board, therefore, understands the basis for NNSA efforts to identify and understand the amount of oversight of its operations. However, the recent efforts to track this oversight, reported in the *CY 2002 Master Schedule of External NNSA Field Assessments* developed by the Office of Facilities and Operations has numerous errors concerning the Board's activities that significantly undermine the utility of this effort. For example:

- ! the report includes numerous "reviews" by the Board's staff that did not involve NNSA or did not occur at all;
- ! the report double counts combined reviews by the Board and its staff as separate reviews;
- ! the report includes the mere presence of the Board or its staff at conferences or other activities conducted by the Department of Energy (DOE) or NNSA as external oversight "reviews"; and
- ! the report includes interactions between the Board and NNSA that were initiated by DOE or NNSA as external oversight.

These and other problems and errors diminish the utility of this NNSA report and misrepresent the Board's involvement in your activities. If you deem it advisable to continue to publish this report, then the Board requests that you review the methods used to gather and evaluate the data presented to improve its accuracy.

Sincerely,

John T. Conway
Chairman

c: Mr. Ralph E. Erickson
Mr. Mark B. Whitaker, Jr.