

January 24, 2003

The Honorable Linton Brooks  
Acting Administrator  
of the National Nuclear Security Administration  
U.S. Department of Energy  
1000 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20585-0701

Dear Ambassador Brooks:

As you know, the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (Board) is mandated by law (42 U.S.C. § 2286a(a)(1)) to review and evaluate the content of all applicable Department of Energy (DOE) Orders, regulations, and requirements. The Board has observed that the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), under the authority granted in § 3212(b)(2) of Public Law 106-65, *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000*, has established a policy letter system for managing policies, directives, and business practices within the NNSA. For example, NNSA has issued six policy letters since May 2002. Two of these letters pertain directly to the administration and implementation of directives and standards; three of these letters affect the management of the environmental, safety, and health programs.

For those DOE directives (e.g., Orders, regulations, and requirements) affecting safety, the Board and DOE have established, by mutual agreement, a working protocol which has been executed between the Board's staff and the DOE's Office of the Departmental Representative to the Board since 1995. The Board would like to invoke the same working relationship for the NNSA policy letter system.

The Board's staff will review the six existing NNSA policy letters and provide comments to NNSA through the Office of the Departmental Representative. Future letters will be reviewed as they are provided under the established protocol.

Sincerely,

John T. Conway  
Chairman

c: Mr. Mark B. Whitaker, Jr.