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The Deputy Secretary of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

August 22, 2000

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DNF SAFETY BOARD

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

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Your June 30, 2000, letter provided comments and observations regarding the independent assessment of the Federal Technical Capability Program. As you know, that assessment was a commitment of the Federal Technical Capability Panel's (Panel) fiscal year 2000 Action Plan and was only recently completed. The report has been forwarded to me, and I am in the process of evaluating the recommendations. Your comments on the findings of the assessment, including the strengths and weaknesses of the Federal Technical Capability Panel, are appreciated and will weigh heavily in the Department's action to further improve the capabilities of its technical workforce.

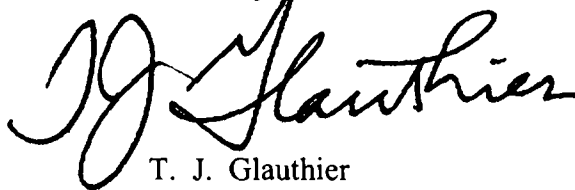
With the formation of the Panel in 1998, and subsequent closure of the Board's Recommendation 93-3, I believe that the Department has established strong, effective mechanisms to address these important technical capability topics. The candor and objectivity reflected in the independent assessment is indicative of the Panel's commitment to doing the best job possible. I share your concerns regarding the apparent need for increased management involvement in the program and will take steps to improve that situation.

An annual report to the Secretary is being prepared by the Panel that will reflect the findings of the independent assessment. The Panel's fiscal year 2001 Action Plan, designed to address recommendations from the annual report that are endorsed by the Secretary, will be completed in August. The fiscal year 2001 Action Plan will include specific commitments that address the recommendations of the independent assessment. I will also make the status of the Federal Technical Capability Panel and the need for increased senior management attention to this program an agenda item for a meeting of the Chief Operating Officers Council that is chaired by Merna Hurd of my staff.

The Panel has worked diligently to identify improvements needed for the continued and enhanced technical capabilities of our Federal workforce. I will ensure that management attention and support is provided to the Panel so that its recommendations are more effectively implemented.

The briefing requested in your letter will be scheduled after the completion of the near-term activities described above. If you have any questions or need any additional information, please contact me directly or you may call Mr. Larry Kirkman, Chair of the Federal Technical Capability Panel, at (505) 845-6121.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. J. Glauthier". The signature is written in a cursive style with large, flowing letters.

T. J. Glauthier

cc: Agents, Federal Technical Capability Panel
M. Whitaker, S-3.1