

John T. Conway, Chairman
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DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

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December 23, 1999

Brigadier General Thomas F. Gioconda
Acting Assistant Secretary for Defense Programs
Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585-0104

Dear General Gioconda:

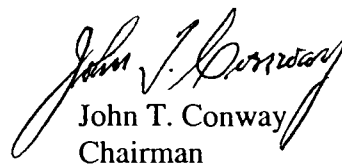
The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (Board) letter of December 7, 1999, to the Department of Energy (DOE) enclosed a report of the Board's staff documenting the review of the design of safety-related aspects of the Tritium Extraction Facility (TEF) and providing examples where additional design features would enhance safety. This report also noted that the seismic design spectrum and its technical bases along with actions being taken to increase seismic safety margin were under review by the Board's staff for adequacy for TEF and other defense nuclear facility projects at the Savannah River Site (SRS).

The Board and its staff have concluded that the seismic design spectrum and actions to increase seismic safety identified in Westinghouse Savannah River Company, Engineering Standard No. 01060, Revision 4, are adequate for TEF. This conclusion for TEF is based, in part, on the limited inventory of material at risk and the expected consequences of potential release of this material to the public and workers. However, the Board's conclusion on adequacy for TEF does not imply adequacy of this seismic design spectrum for other defense nuclear facility projects at SRS. The site wide application of this design spectrum is still under review by the Board's staff and will be the subject of future discussions with DOE's staff.

In addition to the selection of appropriate design requirements, the Board emphasizes the importance of strong DOE oversight and contractor quality assurance programs to ensure that the design and construction of TEF is performed in accordance with those design requirements. The Board and its staff will continue to follow closely the TEF project.

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

Sincerely,


John T. Conway
Chairman

c: Mr. Mark B. Whitaker, Jr.
Mr. Greg Rudy