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DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

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PRESS RELEASE

Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board Celebrates 35 Years of Ensuring Nuclear Safety

Washington, DC— The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DNFSB) is proud to celebrate its 35th anniversary today, October 18, 2024.

Established by Congress in 1988, the DNFSB was created to provide independent safety oversight of the Department of Energy’s defense nuclear facilities. Over the past three and a half decades, the DNFSB has remained unwavering in its mission to protect public health, workers, and the environment by ensuring the highest standards of safety in nuclear operations.

The creation of the DNFSB stemmed from growing concerns in the late 1980s about the safety of the U.S. nuclear weapons complex. In response, Congress included provisions in the *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1989*, signed into law by President Ronald Reagan on September 29, 1988. The DNFSB officially began its operations on October 18, 1989, marking the start of a new era in independent nuclear safety oversight. Since then, the Board has played a pivotal role in enhancing nuclear safety standards and reducing risks in Department of Energy operations.

As part of its oversight responsibilities, the DNFSB has issued numerous recommendations to address evolving safety challenges. The Board’s efforts have been instrumental in stabilizing legacy nuclear materials, reviewing the safety designs of new facilities, and confronting emerging risks across the defense nuclear sector.

“Since our founding, the DNFSB has remained committed to ensuring the safe operation of defense nuclear facilities, working closely with the Department of Energy to identify and address potential risks,” said Joyce L. Connery, Chair of the DNFSB. *“Our mission continues to be vital to the safety and security of the American people and our nation’s nuclear infrastructure. We look forward to building on this legacy in the years to come.”*

Today, the DNFSB is looking to the future, with a focus on adapting to new challenges and ensuring safety across both aging and modernizing nuclear facilities. The Board is committed to proactively identifying safety issues, maintaining transparency, and upholding accountability as it continues its role as an independent voice in nuclear safety oversight.

“The defense nuclear landscape is continually evolving, and safety standards and innovation should continue to evolve as well,” Connery added. *“This anniversary is a moment to celebrate*

our achievements, and to recommit ourselves to the critical mission of safeguarding our nation's defense nuclear facilities."

Throughout its history, the DNFSB's work has been driven by the dedication and expertise of its technical experts, legal staff, and administrative teams. Each member of the agency has played a crucial role in fulfilling its responsibilities, contributing to the protection of national security and communities near defense nuclear sites.

As the DNFSB looks toward the future, the agency is focused on continuing its mission with excellence, innovation, and a renewed commitment to collaboration.

For more information, please visit <https://www.dnfsb.gov/>