



Department of Energy
National Nuclear Security Administration
Washington, DC 20585

October 19, 2011

OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

The Honorable Peter S. Winokur
Chairman
Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board
625 Indiana Avenue, NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) acknowledges receipt of the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (Board) letter dated August 25, 2011, concerning conduct of operations at the Y-12 National Security Complex (Y-12 NSC). Strong conduct of operations is essential to nuclear safety and the safety of workers, the public, and the environment. NNSA is committed to pursuing opportunities to further improve performance at the Y-12 NSC.

Safety is instrumental in the execution of the NNSA mission at all of our sites. Focused attention on safety (including the Board's input), a strong safety culture, and a system of layered defenses provide NNSA confidence that operations at Y-12 NSC are safe and compliant. This assurance is only as good as the diligence with which it is guarded. Consequently, NNSA takes seriously and acts as warranted on all feedback related to operational performance.

NNSA shares your concerns with procedure adherence issues at the Y-12 NSC. This is an area in which excellence is the expectation for acceptable performance, and, as the Y-12 NSC assurance and oversight systems have indicated, an area in which both NNSA and the Y-12 contractor are not fully satisfied. Over the past several months, Babcock & Wilcox Technical Services Y-12, LLC (B&W Y-12) management has provided increased emphasis on the development of and adherence to technical procedures. While the results of this emphasis have not yet come to full fruition, anecdotal evidence is pointing to an overall positive outcome.

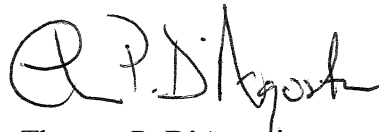
The additional observations and suggestions provided in your letter for improving operational performance are appreciated. To capture these enhancements, B&W Y-12 has drafted a Conduct of Operations – Performance Improvement Plan which we will share with the Board Y-12 Site Representatives as soon as it is finalized. When the plan is implemented, NNSA will conduct a review to assess the effectiveness of the actions in addressing the root causes of the Y-12 NSC's recent issues as requested in the Board's letter. These and other actions initiated by B&W Y-12 and the NNSA Y-12 Site Office will be evaluated as part of ongoing operational performance improvement activities.

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NNSA looks forward to further working with the Board and sharing progress in addressing the identified concerns within the requested six months.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. P. D'Agostino". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "T" and "P".

Thomas P. D'Agostino
Administrator

cc: L. A. Rogers, MA-40
T. D. Sherry, YSO
D. K. Hoag, YSO
J. K. Cravens, YSO
K. D. Ivey, YSO