

May 12, 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:

The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (Board) has been following development and design activities for the DynEx Project at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) for several years. During this time, the Board has observed significant improvements in safety—particularly in the specification of design and procurement requirements for vessel systems. In discussions with LANL management, the Board has also provided feedback on the need for safety improvements in other areas, such as assembly, on-site transportation, radiography, and firing point operations and facilities. A major emphasis of the Board has been on fully addressing hazards, where possible, through the use of engineered controls as opposed to an overemphasis on administrative controls.

Based on discussions with representatives of the National Nuclear Security Administration-Headquarters and the Los Alamos Site Office, the Board understands that LANL is in the process of reviewing the control of hazards and the facility utilization for the DynEx Project with the aim of improving safety. The Board is encouraged by LANL's initiative on this matter and requests a briefing on the results of the review.

Sincerely,

John T. Conway
Chairman

c: The Honorable Everet H. Beckner
Mr. Ralph E. Erickson
Admiral George Pete Nanos
Mr. Mark B. Whitaker, Jr.