



The Deputy Secretary of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

October 13, 2017

MEMORANDUM FOR HEADS OF DEPARTMENTAL ELEMENTS

FROM: DAN BROUILLETTE

SUBJECT: Relationship with the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board

It is my intention to continue a strong and productive relationship with the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DNFSB or Board) as a valued external and independent reviewer. By law, the mission of the DNFSB is “to provide independent analysis, advice, and recommendations” to assist the Department of Energy (DOE) “in providing adequate protection of public health and safety at ... defense nuclear facilities.”

As stated by Secretary Bodman over a decade ago and still true today, DOE is solely responsible for the safe operations of our facilities and sites. I believe strongly that we have the responsibility and duty to:

- Carry out our mission in a safe, secure, and environmentally responsible way;
- Provide reasonable assurance of adequate protection to public health and safety; and
- Accept responsibility for the outcome.

The DNFSB can and does provide valuable insight and advice as part of this process, but, ultimately, we cannot abdicate our responsibility to appropriately manage the risks associated with our operations.

I believe in line management accountability and the necessity for clear roles and responsibilities. At various times in the past, DOE may have, either through our action or lack thereof, blurred the distinction between our ownership and that of external advisors, such as the DNFSB.

In our interactions with the Board, the Department will:

- Perform our role as facility operator and regulator, as well as steward for the taxpayer, in accomplishing DOE’s legally mandated missions;
- Cooperate closely with the DNFSB and provide access to information in our possession necessary for the DNFSB to carry out its lawful duties and responsibilities;
- Engage with the DNFSB in advance to understand the bases and underlying analyses behind its advice or draft recommendations, including the safety benefits it sees for Departmental operations;



- Thoughtfully consider information, ideas, and technical advice of the DNFSB and its staff, but reserve the right to make decisions based upon our own sound technical expertise and risk analysis;
- Develop achievable and appropriate implementation plans to guide our efforts as we address DNFSB recommendations;
- Responsibly execute our internal commitments (to include Implementation Plans) as well as our external commitments (such as reporting requested by the Board);
- Formulate consolidated DOE positions on policy (to include directives and standards) prior to DNFSB and DNFSB staff engagement so that we speak with one voice; and
- Coordinate DNFSB and DNFSB staff requests to avoid redundancies.

As we strive to improve management of the Department, we must constantly remember the importance of both line management accountability and clarity in roles and responsibilities between the Department and the Board. I expect line managers to make sound technical decisions, drawing on all reasonably available information, including advice and observations from the DNFSB.

I look to the line managers throughout the Department to exercise sound judgment and responsibly engage in matters of safety, security, environment, and mission that are crucial to meeting our obligations to the American people.