

**The Deputy Secretary of Energy**

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May 3, 2000

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DNF SAFETY BOARD

The Honorable John T. Conway
Chairman
Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board
625 Indiana Avenue, NW, Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Thank you for your March 2, 2000, letter regarding the quality of authorization bases at defense nuclear facilities. I agree that the recent self-assessment of authorization bases at the Los Alamos National Laboratory is a good model of how the Department of Energy can use self-assessments to enhance safety at our hazardous facilities.

The Department uses a variety of mechanisms to ensure that authorization bases are adequate and upgraded where necessary. The cognizant secretarial officers are responsible for approving authorization bases and for providing qualified technical personnel for reviewing safety documentation.

In response to your request, personnel from the Department's Offices of Defense Programs and Environmental Management will be prepared to brief you by June 16, 2000, on their mechanisms and resources directed at assuring the quality of authorization basis documents, and on any plans they have to perform self-assessments of these documents.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. J. Glauthier".

E. J. Glauthier

