

Bruce Hamilton, Chairman
Jessie H. Roberson
Joyce L. Connery

**DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES
SAFETY BOARD**

Washington, DC 20004-2901



January 16, 2020

The Honorable Dan Brouillette
Secretary of Energy
US Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585-1000

Dear Secretary Brouillette:

Congratulations on your confirmation as the Secretary of Energy. We look forward to working with you as we carry out our statutory mission of advising you on matters concerning the adequate protection of public health and safety at defense nuclear facilities.

The enclosure highlights key challenges that we believe you face regarding your responsibilities associated with defense nuclear facilities. We kindly request the opportunity to visit with you in person during the first calendar quarter of this year to discuss these challenges, as well as methods to improve the effectiveness of our routine interface. Our point of contact for scheduling is our Manager of Board Operations, Ms. Tara Tadlock.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bruce Hamilton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "B".

Bruce Hamilton
Chairman

Enclosure

c: Mr. Joe Olencz

Enclosure

Key Challenges Facing the Defense Nuclear Weapons Complex

- **Resolving differences between DOE Order 140.1, *Interface with the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board*, and the related language in the Fiscal Year 2020 National Defense Authorization Act.**
- **Implementing near-term compensatory measures at the Savannah River Site tritium facilities** to adequately protect workers and other onsite personnel during energetic accident scenarios.
- **Developing and executing an implementation plan for Recommendation 2019-1, *Uncontrolled Hazard Scenarios and 10 CFR 830 Implementation at the Pantex Plant***, that addresses our recommendation to ensure that the workers and surrounding public at the Pantex Plant are adequately protected.
- **Strengthening DOE's regulatory framework**, including Title 10 CFR 830, *Nuclear Safety Management*, and promptly implementing revisions across your defense nuclear facilities to continue to ensure the adequate protection of public health and safety.
- **Establishing clear requirements and improving guidance for Technical Safety Requirements and Unreviewed Safety Questions**, and improving the implementation of these important aspects of the safety basis.
- **Updating directives to reflect lessons learned from the two radioactive waste release events at Idaho National Laboratory and the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant**, and ensuring updates get implemented expediently throughout the nuclear weapons complex.
- **Improving criticality safety at the Y-12 National Security Complex** to address programmatic weaknesses that led to significant uranium accumulation events.
- **Improving federal oversight, federal technical capabilities, and federal line management responsibility** to ensure DOE's effectiveness in managing a changing workforce and ensuring its missions are conducted safely.