

John T. Conway, Chairman
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John W. Crawford, Jr.
Joseph J. DiNunno
Herbert John Cecil Kouts

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

625 Indiana Avenue, NW, Suite 700, Washington, D.C. 20004
(202) 208-6400



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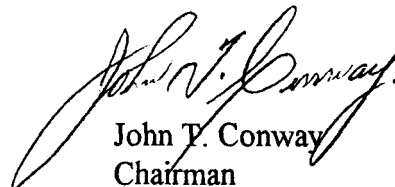
The Honorable Victor H. Reis
Assistant Secretary for Defense Programs
Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20585-0104

Dear Dr. Reis:

The Department of Energy (DOE) conducted this year's second subcritical experiment, HOLOG, on September 18, 1997, at the Nevada Test Site. The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (Board) commends DOE's Nevada Operations Office and the Joint Test Organization for their safe execution of this experiment.

The Board is encouraged by the Nevada Operations Office's **efforts** to develop and eventually implement new DOE-Nevada Orders that define a process for integrated safety management of subcritical experiments. It is expected that this process, as defined in the Orders, will address many of the concerns transmitted in previous letters, such as **quality** assurance, safety basis documentation, and review integration, and that more recent issues raised by the Board and its staff regarding emergency response for the **U1a** complex will also be resolved by the emergency response plans, procedures, and capabilities developed as part of the process for **fully** integrated safety management. The Board and its **staff** will continue to monitor both the ongoing development of this process and its implementation prior to the execution of any **future** subcritical experiments.

Sincerely,



John T. Conway
Chairman

c: Mr. Mark B. Whitaker, Jr.
Mr. Gerald W. Johnson
Dr. Siegfried S. Hecker
Dr. C. Bruce Tartar