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# DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

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99-0001062



April 27, 1999

The Honorable Bill Richardson  
Secretary of Energy  
1000 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20585-1000

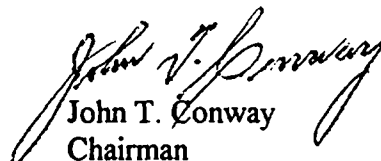
Dear Secretary Richardson:

The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (Board) recently received the Department of Energy's (DOE) request to close Recommendation 93-6, *Maintaining Access to Nuclear Weapons Expertise in the Defense Nuclear Facilities Complex*, which was issued to DOE on December 10, 1993. The Board agrees that DOE had met all of the commitments in the original and revised Implementation Plans for Recommendation 93-6.

Many changes have occurred to DOE's defense mission and infrastructure since the Board issued Recommendation 93-6, and more can be anticipated. The recent report of the Commission on Maintaining Nuclear Weapons Expertise confirmed that the significant losses of experience from the nuclear weapons workforce due to retirements represent a real challenge to the future success of DOE's stockpile stewardship and management program. The highest level of DOE management attention will continue to be needed to address this challenge. The Board believes that DOE's knowledge preservation efforts, initiated in response to Recommendation 93-6, have yielded invaluable materials for use in training and qualifying the next generation of the nuclear weapons workforce.

The Board accepts the proposal to close Recommendation 93-6, and welcomes the Office of Defense Program's commitment to a continuing dialogue on knowledge preservation issues. The Board will continue to monitor DOE's efforts in this endeavor, given its significance to safety and the national security.

Sincerely,

  
John T. Conway  
Chairman

c: The Honorable Victor H. Reis  
Mr. Mark B. Whitaker, Jr.