

John T. Conway, Chairman  
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# DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

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98-0001741



April 24, 1998

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 Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (Board) has reviewed the white paper on authorization agreements, dated October 1, 1997, that was written by the Research and Development (R&D) Working Group. This white paper was submitted to the Board on February 27, 1998, as the final Department of Energy (DOE) commitment in response to the Board's 1995 reporting requirement on R&D Safety. The paper addresses the concept of authorization agreements relative to R&D activities and facilities at the nuclear weapons laboratories, as well as how these agreements might fit within the context of Integrated Safety Management Systems.

The Board commends the efforts of the R&D Working Group, which was composed of representatives from DOE and the weapons laboratories. The Board understands that the concepts the Group developed were considered by and found helpful to those representatives from DOE and the Board's staff who collaborated to formulate DOE Guide 450.4-1, *Integrated Safety Management System Guide*. The Board assumes that the Guide reflects a more current and authoritative consensus on the essential elements and intended uses of authorization agreements, and that it will be used accordingly. In light of the existence of this superseding guidance, the Board agrees that the 1995 R&D Safety reporting requirement can be closed.

The Board will closely track the collaborative development and use of authorization agreements by DOE and the laboratories. The Board looks forward to the laboratories' continued involvement in and input to Integrated Safety Management System policy and guidance development in support of DOE's implementation of Board Recommendation 95-2 throughout the defense nuclear complex.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John T. Conway". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

John T. Conway  
Chairman

c: Mark B. Whitaker, Jr.