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Department of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

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December 16, 1993

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

Dear Mr. Conway:

The Implementation Plan for Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board Recommendation 93-2 requires a quarterly status report. Enclosed is the Department of Energy's quarterly status report for the fourth quarter of Fiscal Year 1993.

Sincerely,

Victor H. Reis
Assistant Secretary
for Defense Programs

Enclosure

cc:

Mark H. [redacted]

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QUARTERLY STATUS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
FOR
DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD RECOMMENDATION 93-2
FOURTH QUARTER FISCAL YEAR 1993

The Nuclear Criticality Experiments Steering Committee (NCESC), as delineated in the Implementation Plan for the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DNFSB) Recommendation 93-2, was established and met three times during the month of September 1993. Accomplishments and issues discussed by the NCESC during the first month of its existence follow:

- o The NCESC recognized an immediate need to develop an experimental needs assessment in order to meet the November 1, 1993, commitment to the DNFSB for completion of an Experimental Needs Assessment review. Little time was available for an independent NCESC assessment of criticality needs. In fact however, such an assessment had been initiated in early Fiscal Year (FY) 1993 by the Department of Energy. The NCESC decided to use this assessment of nuclear criticality experimental needs as a source document. This initial needs assessment meets the November 1, 1993, commitment to the DNFSB and will be further refined by the NCESC with the help of their Methodology and Experiments Subcommittee (which is currently being organized).
- o A draft charter was developed and began an iterative review process by the NCESC.
- o A memorandum for the Assistant Secretary for Defense Programs' signature requesting membership on the two technical subcommittees was approved by the committee and began the Defense Programs concurrence process.
- o Upon notification of FY 1994 nuclear criticality training funding problems, the NCESC began developing options for satisfactory resolution of the issue. The NCESC's intention was to facilitate short-term resolution of this problem while pursuing a long-term solution through the Training Subcommittee, once it has been established.
- o The NCESC agreed that Energy Research should be represented on the Committee because of their involvement with the nuclear data bases and would continue to pursue their representation.

The NCESC has made a very encouraging start and is addressing the key issues surrounding the maintenance of nuclear criticality experiments and training capabilities. The focus of the Committee in the next quarter will be to approve the charter, establish the technical subcommittees, and continue assessing experimental and training needs as a basis for justifying the funding necessary to support these needs.