



The Secretary of Energy
Washington, D.C. 20585

February 1, 2010

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

The Honorable John E. Mansfield
Vice Chairman
Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board
625 Indiana Avenue, NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20004-2941

Dear Mr. Vice Chairman:

In Recommendation 2009-1, *Risk Assessment Methodologies at Defense Nuclear Facilities*, the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (Board) recommended that the Department of Energy (DOE) establish a policy, including activities supporting development and implementation of that policy, on the use of quantitative risk assessment (QRA) for nuclear safety applications. My response letter of November 3, 2009, accepted your recommendation and committed to a series of near-term and longer-term actions that the Department believed to be responsive to the Recommendation.

In your reply of December 18, 2009, you indicated that you found our Implementation Plan to constitute a partial rejection of Recommendation 2009-1. I want to reiterate that we accept the Recommendation, and that we are committed to addressing the issues it raised by evaluating potential improvements in how risk assessment and management are addressed by our nuclear safety directives. This is the intended focus of our Implementation Plan. We share your concern regarding the potential for ad hoc use of QRA at DOE defense nuclear facilities. Accordingly, we are chartering a working group of risk assessment experts who will support the program offices in promoting a consistent and appropriately rigorous use of QRA, while a final approach to revising our policy, directive and guidance documents is developed. Using the information derived from the study called for in our Implementation Plan, we will revise our current Nuclear Safety Policy and standards to appropriately address QRA.

We will provide interim advice to DOE sites on the QRA process, complete the update to the Nuclear Safety Policy and provide you our plans for the appropriate directive or standard changes by the end of Calendar Year 2010. The Department understands the Board's concerns regarding the use of QRA and plans to seek input from your staff as we revise our implementation plan to clearly incorporate these commitments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steven Chu".

Steven Chu

