

John T. Conway, Chairman
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DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

625 Indiana Avenue, NW, Suite 700, Washington, D.C. 20004
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February 9, 1998

Mr. Gene Ives
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Military
Application and Stockpile Management
Defense Programs
Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585-1000

Dear Mr. Ives:

The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (Board) received your letter of December 30, 1997, requesting an extension for submission of a report on facility utilization at the Pantex Plant. The Board requested this report in a letter to the Department of Energy (DOE) dated August 8, 1997. The Board hereby grants your request for additional time to prepare and submit the report no later than February 27, 1998.

As discussed with you in December 1997, the Board would like to reemphasize some key issues related to its request for this report. The report should address whether the relative hazards of operations and relative capabilities of facilities have historically been factored into decisions on facility use, and if so, the mechanisms for making those decisions. In addressing whether it is feasible and advantageous to move W69 dismantlement operations to another, superior facility, an assessment of both the beneficial and adverse effects of doing so should be included, as well as the costs and other program impacts. The facility selection process used in the future to assign nuclear explosive operations to specific Pantex bays or cells should ensure that all appropriate facilities are candidates for selection, not just those that are currently idle or vacant. The report should also address how the improved facility selection process will be incorporated into the Integrated Safety Process now being developed and implemented at Pantex.

The Board's staff is available to work with your staff in completing this report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John T. Conway". The signature is written in a cursive style.

John T. Conway
Chairman

c: Mr. Mark B. Whitaker, Jr.