

John T. Conway, Chairman
A.J. Eggenberger, Vice Chairman
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DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

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January 30, 2004

The Honorable Jessie Hill Roberson
Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585-0113


Dear Ms. Roberson:

During 2003, the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (Board) noted with concern the continued trend of accidents and near misses during deactivation and decommissioning work at clean-up sites throughout the weapons complex. Examples include heavy equipment accidents, falling debris, electrical safety events, and the glovebox fire at the Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site. In a letter to you dated March 19, 2002, the Board proposed the issuance of a compendium of good practices related to deactivation and decommissioning work in order to preserve and share lessons learned. Incorporation of lessons learned into work practices would serve to prevent or reduce the number of accidents at clean-up sites.

In July 2003, the Department of Energy's Richland Operations Office issued a document entitled *Criticality Safety Lessons Learned in a Deactivation and Decommissioning Environment, A Guide for Facility and Project Managers*. The Board reviewed this document and found it to be a useful source of information for implementing a sound criticality safety program during deactivation and decommissioning.

The Board notes that your office distributed this report to all field office managers. The Board encourages you to consider compiling similar guides to good practices in such areas as glovebox dismantlement, demolition of structures, and fire protection during deactivation and decommissioning.

Sincerely,


John T. Conway
Chairman

c: Mr. Keith A. Klein
Mr. Mark B. Whitaker, Jr.