

Peter S. Winokur, Chairman
Jessie H. Roberson, Vice Chairman
John E. Mansfield
Joseph F. Bader

**DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES
SAFETY BOARD**

Washington, DC 20004-2901



October 13, 2011

The Honorable Secretary Chu
Secretary of Energy
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585-1000

Dear Secretary Chu:

In our letter of August 12, 2011, the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (Board) alerted you to our concern that the Department of Energy (DOE) may not fully understand the intent of the Board's Recommendation 2011-1, *Safety Culture at the Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant (WTP)*. The seriousness of our concerns compelled us to ask for clarification to better understand the "gap" between the Board's and DOE's evaluation of the weaknesses/flaws in the safety culture at the WTP. The Board appreciates your acceptance letter, dated September 19, 2011, and the efforts DOE is making to close that "gap." At this time, the Board believes all interests will be best served by careful evaluation of DOE's Implementation Plan for the recommendation.

As we communicated in Recommendation 2011-1, the Board believes it is vital to the success of the project that the Secretary assert federal control at the highest level and direct, track, and validate the specific corrective actions to be taken to establish a strong safety culture within the WTP project, consistent with the objectives of DOE Policy 420.1, *Department of Energy Nuclear Safety Policy*. The Board is encouraged by your statement that your contractor's activities, such as the Safety and Quality Culture Assessment Team, are not a substitute for DOE-directed reviews. The Board remains interested in the progress and findings of recent, ongoing and future safety culture assessments, including those evaluating the extent of condition across the complex, and those specific to WTP being performed by DOE's Office of Health, Safety and Security. And, of course, the Board looks forward to receiving your Implementation Plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P.S. Winokur".

Peter S. Winokur, Ph.D.
Chairman

c: Ms. Mari-Jo Campagnone