

Peter S. Winokur, Chairman
Jessie H. Roberson, Vice Chairman
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**DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES
SAFETY BOARD**

Washington, DC 20004-2901



May 16, 2014

Mr. David Huizenga
Acting Assistant Secretary for Environmental
Management
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585-0113

Dear Mr. Huizenga:

The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (Board) is increasingly concerned with shortcomings in the safe performance of work across the Savannah River Site (SRS). Particular areas of concern include the implementation of worker and facility safety controls, the conduct of maintenance, and hazardous energy control. Complicating the situation have been the persistently high backlogs of corrective maintenance, increased downtime at processing facilities due to equipment issues, multiple errors in engineering and nuclear safety documents, and weaknesses in the training program. One positive factor is that many of these issues have been identified by Department of Energy facility representatives and engineers as part of their oversight. However, the Board is concerned about the implications and collective significance of these issues.

The Board appreciates that DOE and its contractors share many of these concerns and are implementing actions to improve performance. While work pauses and all-hands briefings have the potential to increase awareness in the short term, the Board is more interested in the institutional actions planned to produce sustained performance improvements in the site's fundamental safety programs. Therefore, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 2286b(d), the Board requests a briefing within 60 days to (1) identify the actions taken by DOE and its contractors to improve performance at SRS; and (2) identify how DOE and the contractors' assurance programs will evaluate the effectiveness of these actions.

Sincerely,

Peter S. Winokur, Ph.D.
Chairman

c: Mr. David C. Moody, III
Mr. Joe Olencz