

Sean Sullivan, Chairman
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**DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES
SAFETY BOARD**

Washington, DC 20004-2901



February 16, 2017

The Honorable Grace Bochenek
Acting Secretary of Energy
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20585-1000

Dear Acting Secretary Bochenek:

The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board reviewed the Department of Energy's (DOE) July 20, 2016, Implementation Plan (IP), Revision 1, for Board Recommendation 2014-1, *Emergency Preparedness and Response* and has concluded that the plan will not effectively implement the Recommendation. The plan makes program management improvements at headquarters but does not delineate the coordination between headquarters and field elements necessary to promptly address deficiencies at the defense nuclear sites.

In our Recommendation we discussed problems noted at various sites and recommended that DOE "by the end of 2016, standardize and improve implementation of its criteria and review approach to confirm that all sites with defense nuclear facilities" have adequate emergency preparedness and response capabilities. Secretary Moniz, by letter dated November 7, 2014, took exception to our "end of 2016" language, but nevertheless committed to accomplishing within one year the highest priority actions for improving emergency management. However, the current IP will not finalize the criteria and review approach (CRAD) until December 2017 and contains no steps for using the CRADs to confirm adequate capabilities at the sites.

Since we issued Recommendation 2014-1 we have observed limited improvements in the conduct of site exercises throughout the defense nuclear complex. The Board has provided specific deficiencies at three sites through formal communication (Pantex, via Recommendation issued November 24, 2015; Savannah River Site, via letter dated December 22, 2015; and Los Alamos National Laboratory via letter dated January 7, 2016). Additionally, our staff has consistently reported other observed deficiencies to the appropriate DOE or NNSA field office.

We view the Implementation Plan of Recommendation 2014-1 as inadequate and significantly behind schedule as compared to Secretary Moniz' originally stated intention. We encourage you to re-visit the plan and consider revising it such that it will improve performance

at sites with defense nuclear facilities in a more timely manner. In this regard, we kindly request that not later than the next formal briefing pursuant to section 9.0 of the plan you communicate to us your intentions moving forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sean Sullivan", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sean Sullivan
Chairman

Enclosure

c: Mr. Joe Olencz