

Thomas A. Summers, Acting Chairman  
Jessie H. Roberson  
Joyce L. Connery

**DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES  
SAFETY BOARD**

Washington, DC 20004-2901



September 29, 2020

The Honorable Dan Brouillette  
Secretary of Energy  
US Department of Energy  
1000 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20585-1000

Dear Secretary Brouillette:

The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board recognizes the Department of Energy's approval of Critical Decision-4 (approve start of operations or project completion) and authorization to operate for the Salt Waste Processing Facility (SWPF), located in the J-Area of the Savannah River Site. Since completion of construction in 2016, the Board has been reviewing DOE's and the contractor's progress toward full commissioning and the start of radiological operations. The Board's review activities focused on system and facility testing, safety basis development, fire protection, training of operations personnel, quality assurance, and emergency preparedness. Most recently, the Board closely evaluated the conduct of the contractor and DOE operational readiness reviews (ORR). While we noted certain concerns with the conduct of the contractor's ORR and the subsequent declaration of readiness, DOE also had recognized and addressed these concerns. The Board currently has no unresolved safety issues from its review activities.

The Board appreciates the cooperation that DOE and its contractor provided to the Board and its staff in support of SWPF review activities. DOE's Savannah River Operations Office has provided close oversight of the SWPF project. We emphasize the importance of that oversight as this complex, new facility proceeds with radiological operations. The Board and its staff will also continue providing oversight as SWPF commences radiological operations.

Yours truly,

*Thomas A. Summers*

Thomas A. Summers  
Acting Chairman

c: Mr. Joe Olencz  
Mr. Michael D. Budney