



Department of Energy
Under Secretary for Nuclear Security
Administrator, National Nuclear Security Administration
Washington, DC 20585



October 28, 2022

The Honorable Joyce L. Connery
Chair, Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board
625 Indiana Avenue NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Chair Connery:

I am responding on behalf of the Secretary to your letter dated August 17, 2022, regarding the results of the DNFSB's review of DOE oversight effectiveness at DOE defense nuclear facilities.

The letter established a 120-day requirement to provide a report and briefing on how DOE/NNSA plans to address the safety matters (e.g., federal oversight of Contractor Assurance System's effectiveness) cited in your incoming letter. While DOE/NNSA is actively addressing the Board's concerns, the final report is still in process and not yet complete.

We have put together a team that includes the Chiefs of Nuclear Safety for Environmental Management, Science, and NNSA, as well as representatives from the DOE Office of Enterprise Assessments and Nuclear Energy. The team is meeting weekly to develop the response to the DNFSB recommended areas of improvement. Since the responsibility to validate the effectiveness of Contractor Assurance Systems for each contractor is one of the primary duties of the Field/Site Offices, the team is actively working with each Field/Site office to understand the application of the observations at a site level. Due to breadth of the areas discussed in the Board's letter, the diversity of the data needed to allow adequate analyses, and the extensive coordination required to develop and collaborate on such a response, DOE/NNSA anticipates providing a report and scheduling a briefing to the Board by March 2023.

DOE/NNSA fully recognizes the agreement in our Memorandum of Understanding to communicate delays in DOE's response to the DNFSB reporting requirements on matters that may affect the Board's oversight. We will continue to communicate our response's status in our routine interface with your DNFSB staff. If you have any questions, please contact Daniel Sigg, Acting Associate Administrator for the Office of Environment, Safety, and Health, at (202) 586-4096.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jill H", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Jill Hruby