

**DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES
SAFETY BOARD**

Washington, DC 20004-2901



June 30, 2017

FROM: Joyce Connery, Board Member
TO: Sean Sullivan, Acting Chairman
SUBJECT: Proposed "DNFSB Reform Plan"
CC: Board Members Roberson, Daniel Santos, Bruce Hamilton
General Counsel, James Biggins

The Agency "Reform Plan" provided to the Board and select staff members on June 12, 2017 represents the view of the current Acting Chairman. Any representation that this action was taken in collaboration with and support of this Board Member or through established procedures is false.

Further, this document does not reflect an effort to appropriately understand the mission of the Agency and its value to the Department of Energy, the National Nuclear Security Administration, Congress, and the stakeholder community.

I fundamentally disagree with the statement that the Board only provides value on the margins and "creates a myriad of unnecessary costs" to the Department. The DNFSB provides a necessary function to ensure that Defense Nuclear Facilities are being adequately overseen by the Department of Energy and provides confidence to Congress and stakeholder communities these facilities are operating safely and that the Secretary of Energy is providing adequate protection to the public. The Department has not incurred any costs as a result of communications from the Board as the Board has no power to mandate actions be taken—the Department must undertake its own cost/benefit analysis and accept risk as it sees fit. Congress balanced the burden on the Department of Energy by creating the Board.

My views regarding the value placed on the Agency by external stakeholders were confirmed during my tenure as the Chairman of the Board in my discussions with Department of Energy and National Nuclear Security Agency officials, site offices, community interest groups, and Members of Congress from both sides of the aisle in whose states and districts Defense Nuclear Facilities are located.

The mere fact that the Acting Chairman of the Agency, who has been a Board Member since 2012, believes that the only reason that the Board should exist is to prevent "political blowback" is problematic and demonstrates a fundamental lack of understanding of the importance of independent safety oversight.


Joyce Connery, DNFSB Board Member