



### Recommendation No. 116

March 28, 2000

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## Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board Recommendation 2000-1

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### **Background**

Six years ago, the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DNFSB) issued Recommendation 94-1 to the Department of Energy (DOE) concerning the need to "stabilize and safely store" various nuclear materials that posed safety hazards in their then current state. Most of the materials were located at SRS, Hanford and Rocky Flats. DOE accepted the recommendation, and it subsequently issued an implementation plan that detailed the remediation steps planned through 2003. In 1998, DOE issued a revised implementation plan that documented the program's progress and reflected a degree of slippage in various areas that were attributed to a number of factors.

While further progress has been made since 1998, additional slippage in some of the scheduled commitments has occurred. At the beginning of this year, the DNFSB issued a new recommendation (2000-1) to DOE expressing their concern over continuing risks in the uncompleted portions of the 94-1 materials stabilization program. The DNFSB perceived that insufficient funding was the primary reason for DOE's failure to meet earlier schedules.

As is mandated by federal regulations, the Secretary of Energy has now replied to the DNFSB recommendation, accepting the need for specific technical actions in order to fully meet the 94-1/2000-1 objectives. The Secretary did state that past delays resulted from a combination of factors, not simply fiscal constraints as suggested by the DNFSB. He committed to provide a new, acceptable implementation plan. It is anticipated that this updated plan will be available for presentation to the DNFSB in the near future.

### **Comment**

The SRS Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) has been very aware of the delays in DOE's meeting the entire 94-1 program and of the risks associated with the unstabilized materials. The CAB views the DNFSB's Recommendation 2000-1 as a very positive first step that will lead to increased focus on timely completion of the program. CAB has noted the Secretary's favorable reply to the latest recommendation and will closely follow the subsequent plans for bringing the 94-1 nuclear materials stabilization plan to completion.

### **Recommendation**

The SRS CAB recommends that :

- DOE provide a presentation of the new implementation plan that includes technical and safety considerations to CAB's Nuclear Materials Committee by May 23, 2000
- DOE offer a subsequent review to the full CAB should this be desired
- DNFSB update the CAB regarding the acceptance or rejection of the implementation plan by July 25, 2000.

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### **Agency Responses**

[\*Department of Energy-SR\*](#)  
[\*U.S. Environmental Protection Agency\*](#)