



August 27, 2019

The Honorable James Inhofe  
Chairman, Senate Committee on Armed Services

The Honorable Jack Reed  
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Armed Services

The Honorable Adam Smith  
Chairman, House Armed Services Committee

The Honorable Mac Thornberry  
Ranking Member, House Armed Services Committee

The Honorable Jim Cooper  
Chairman, Strategic Forces Subcommittee of House Armed Services Committee

**Reject Proposed "Plutonium Bomb Plant" (PBP) at Savannah River Site for "Pit" Production;  
Investigate MOX for Fraud, Waste, Abuse and Mismanagement before "Repurposing"**

Dear Congressmen Inhofe, Reed, Smith, Thornberry and Cooper:

I am writing concerning the important House-Senate deliberations to take place on the issue of plutonium "pit" production during reconciliation of your differing versions of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020.

For a host of reasons, including the ones mentioned below, I urge the NDAA conferees to adopt the sensible House language concerning pit production and revoke language requiring unnecessary production of 80 pits per year for new nuclear weapons.

1. **The Department of Energy has not presented justification for pursuit of the proposed Plutonium Bomb Plant (PBP) here at the Savannah River Site.** As SRS has zero experience with pit production, the risks of carrying out such a costly and complicated project are exacerbated. Additionally, we do not welcome more nuclear and chemical waste streams at the site associated with pit production and we firmly reject import of yet more plutonium to South Carolina. As we strive for a cleaner, sustainable SRS, pit production fails to meet our vision as part of the future for the site.



2. **Investigations and hearings into possible fraud, waste, abuse and mismanagement of the bungled MOX project must be held before any "repurposing" of the facility** is considered for pit production or any other new mission. The waste of over \$5 billion on the bungled MOX plant construction can't simply be swept under the rug. Managers with DOE and the National Nuclear Security Administration and contractors must be held accountable for the project's failure and a "lessons learned" report must be made publicly available. I request that the Armed Services Committees immediately set up a process for review of the MOX project, including both construction and termination.
  
3. **DOE has failed to demonstrate that the MOX plant could be repurposed for pit production.** The status of construction at the MOX facility must be established via investigations, hearings and DOE reports required by the Armed Services Committees. Construction problems at the now-terminated Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrication Facility include quality of HVAC and piping systems, lack of documentation of quality of through-wall embeds and an interruption in construction and component quality certification records due to termination of oversight by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. DOE has refused to respond to Freedom of Information Act requests by SRS Watch concerning plans related to closure of the MOX project and its transition into the PBP. The Armed Services Committees should obtain any such plans and release them publicly.
  
4. **As the production of 50+ pits per year at SRS would apparently be for a new nuclear warhead – the W87-1-like warhead – the need for this warhead has not been established.** The Department of Defense and the National Nuclear Security Administration must be directed by Armed Services to demonstrate need for this warhead before new pit production can be authorized, funded or pursued.
  
5. **The NNSA has also failed to prepare any form of a "nuclear proliferation risk assessment" related to production and deployment of a new warhead utilizing new plutonium pits.** The Armed Services Committees must direct NNSA to prepare such a document before any new pit production can be authorized, funded or pursued.

Thank you for considering the views of Savannah River Site Watch on this matter of importance to national security and the future of Savannah River Site.

Sincerely,



Tom Clements

Director, Savannah River Site Watch

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