Representative Jim Clyburn May 8, 2024

274 Cannon House Office Building

Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Clyburn,

**Halt a Nuclear Arms Race, Protect the Environment: Stop SRS Plutonium Pit Plant**

I am writing to ask you to go on the record to oppose the new nuclear bomb factory planned for the DOE’s Savannah River Site. It is startling to learn that SRS is quietly being turned into a nuclear weapons facility, which is taking place with no involvement of the people of South Carolina. This is unacceptable.

The proposed facility, the SRS Plutonium Processing Facility – more accurately called a plutonium bomb plant – would make 50 or more plutonium cores (pits) a year, initially for the warheads in unneeded new nuclear weapons, including a land-based missile and a submarine missile. As SRS has no experience handling pits and little experience processing plutonium since the 1980s, this project poses huge technical and safety challenges.

In 2024, the SRS pit plant was funded by Congress at a staggering $1 billion and this year the funding request has grown to $1.3 billion. To convert the partially constructed plutonium fuel MOX plant, on which $5 billion was wasted, into a nuclear weapons facility could cost up to $25 billion, according to DOE. That makes it perhaps the most expensive single building in US history. Operation of the facility over 50 years would likely be over $500 million per year. Such funding levels put huge strain on the Department of Energy budget, divert precious resources from funding human needs and enrich contractors.

I oppose the plutonium pit project at SRS for the following reasons and ask you take my concerns into account. **Please let me know where you stand on this matter**.

* New plutonium pits for new nuclear weapons will stimulate a new nuclear arms race with China and Russia. Instead, we should open negotiations to halt new nuclear weapons and again pursue nuclear disarmament as required by the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).
* While proponents claim that the new nuclear weapons are for “deterrence,” they are in reality part of a plan to fight a full-scale war, as outlined in the Nuclear Posture Review. As the threat of nuclear war undermines our security, those war-fighting plans must be put aside and the 5000 weapons in the US stockpile must be reduced.
* Construction of the new pit plant at SRS and operation of it will waste billions of dollars that would be better spent on education, health care and environmental protection.
* Production of plutonium pits produces a large amount of plutonium waste (transuranic waste) that would have to be dumped in New Mexico and low-level waste created from pit production would likely be dumped into unlined trenches on the site, threatening groundwater. Handling of plutonium could result in plutonium fires, inadvertent nuclear criticalities and release of plutonium, which has a 24,000-year half-life, into our environment – all risks that make us less secure and that must be avoided.

**I ask that you go on record against the proposed SRS pit plant**, that you vote to cut funding for it and that you urge President Biden to oppose development of new nuclear weapons.

Sincerely,