

Selected Budget Highlights of NNSA's FY 2014 Budget Request

Along with the rest of the federal government the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) released its FY 2014 Congressional Budget Request two months late on April 10, 2012, without required detailed justifications (they were provided a week later). Some highlights are:

- NNSA's FY 2014 nuclear weapons budget request is \$7.87 billion, in real terms a 16.7% increase above FY 2013 sequester levels, virtually unheard of in all other federal agencies given our nation's fiscal constraints. That large increase is especially ironic given the agency's chronic cost overruns and mismanagement in both construction projects and nuclear weapons programs.
- NNSA plans to increase its nuclear weapons budget to \$9.29 billion by 2018, an 18% increase.
- The B61 Life Extension Program (LEP) has mushroomed from an estimated \$4 billion to \$10.4 billion (not including DoD costs). Nevertheless, NNSA has requested \$537 million in FY 2014, 46% above FY 2013. Past modifications to nuclear weapons have created new military capabilities.
- NNSA has also requested \$72.7 million for a new Life Extension Program that may develop an "interoperable" joint warhead to replace the Air Force's W78 and the Navy's W88. Yet a Sept. 2012 Navy memo states it doesn't want to support such a LEP until the mid-2020's, if then.
- The massive Uranium Processing Facility is funded at \$328.8 million despite design problems.
- NNSA cut its Inertial Confinement Fusion program by 14% because of the National Ignition Facility's (NIF's) failure to achieve ignition. NIF should be cut far deeper and the Lawrence Livermore Lab's future in nuclear weapons programs seriously questioned.
- NNSA also cut the MOX Fuel Fabrication Facility by 27% because of cost overruns, hopefully leading to the near-term termination of the deeply flawed and troubled MOX program.

Recommendations

In order to best conserve taxpayers' dollar while enhancing national security Congress should:

- Cut the B61 Life Extension Program until credible total (NNSA and DoD) costs are supplied. Require NATO countries to share LEP costs since the bombs will be forward deployed in Europe.
- Require the Navy and Air Force to clarify their positions on NNSA's proposed W78/W88 interoperable warhead.
- Prohibit new military capabilities in refurbished nuclear weapons.
- Require a study on reuse of uranium "secondaries" and an assessment of needed production.
- Require a study by independent experts comparing the cost benefits and technical merits of preserving stockpile safety and reliability through rigorous surveillance and maintenance versus Life Extension Programs that intentionally introduce major new changes.
- Terminate the MOX Program and pursue alternative strategies to dispose of 34 metric tons of plutonium as agreed to with Russia.
- Cut the National Ignition Facility's operating funds to ~\$100 million.
- Require specific performance benchmarks that contractors are held accountable to.

See our compilation of NNSA's FY 2014 budget at

http://nukewatch.org/economics/FY2014_NNSA_Budget_4-10-13_Print.pdf April 13, 2013 (rev. 5/10/13)

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