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COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-6035

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ROBERT L. SIMMONS, II, STAFF DIRECTOR

March 23, 2011

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Chairman, House Committee on the Budget
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Funds necessary for the safety, security and reliability of our nuclear weapons

Dear Mr. Chairman:

We write to express our deep concern about the effects H.R.1 will have on the Fiscal Year (FY) 2011 and possibly FY 2012 funding for the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA). NNSA's fundamental national security responsibility is to ensure the safety, security, and reliability of the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile and to secure and remove dangerous nuclear and radiological material from around the world. These crucial national security missions must continue with all the resources necessary to be successful.

As you know, funding for NNSA and other defense-related activities in the Department of Energy (DOE) falls within Budget Function 050 for national defense budget activities. However, NNSA was subject to the across-the-board reductions in non-security spending in H.R.1, which were applied across all DOE programs, regardless of mission. We hope we can work with you to resolve this for the FY 2012 budget resolution to ensure the NNSA remains classified as a national defense function and is provided sufficient budget allocation to support its critical national security activities.

A safe, secure, and reliable nuclear stockpile is essential to U.S. security. NATO singles out America's nuclear weapons as "the supreme guarantee of the security of the Allies." These weapons provide a deterrent to would-be aggressors and assure over two dozen allies and partners that rely on U.S. extended deterrence. However, as observed in 2009 by the bipartisan Strategic Posture Commission, led by former secretaries of defense William Perry and James Schlesinger, our nuclear weapons infrastructure is "decrepit." The nation's nuclear weapons laboratory directors, in correspondence with our committee last year, further highlighted warhead aging and other recently identified problems that complicate their ability to certify the safety, security, and reliability of the stockpile.

Addressing these concerns and in the context of the ratification of New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START), the Administration made a significant commitment to the modernization of our

nuclear stockpile and infrastructure in its 2010 Nuclear Posture Review and Section 1251 Report to Congress. On a bipartisan basis, our colleagues in the Senate also made clear that their support for the nuclear force reductions in New START was directly linked to the modernization of NNSA's nuclear weapons facilities and the nuclear arsenal.

The Administration has requested \$11.8 billion for NNSA in FY 2012 to continue the implementation of its nuclear modernization, defense nuclear nonproliferation, and naval nuclear propulsion plans. Of this amount, \$7.6 billion is specifically requested for NNSA weapons activities, consistent with the funding promises made by the President last year. While the NNSA weapons activities request is \$621 million more than the FY 2011 requested level, an additional \$312 million may be required in FY 2012 to restore the shortfall from FY 2011, should H.R.1 with its cuts to NNSA pass as currently written.

Such funding increases are necessary in order to reverse "the pattern of underinvestment over the last two decades," as the Strategic Posture Commission observed. More specifically, the additional funds would enable NNSA to continue meeting our nation's requirements for the stewardship and sustainment of the nuclear stockpile, modernize the nuclear security enterprise, and renew critical science and engineering capabilities. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates agreed with this need and committed to transferring over \$8 billion from the Department of Defense to NNSA in the FY 2013-16 timeframe to help pay for it. Furthermore, he told our committee last month in testimony, NNSA "is incredibly important, and it clearly is intimately tied to our national security and should be regarded as part of the security component."

The Strategic Posture Commission also observed that, "The surest way to prevent nuclear terrorism is to deny terrorist acquisitions of nuclear weapons or fissile materials," and recommended that, "An accelerated campaign to close or secure the world's most vulnerable nuclear sites as quickly as possible should be a top national priority." To this end, \$2.5 billion is specifically requested in FY 2012 for NNSA defense nuclear nonproliferation programs to implement the Administration's plans to secure and remove dangerous fissile material from around the world. However, this request assumes full funding of the FY 2011 request of \$2.7 billion for defense nuclear nonproliferation. Should the cuts in H.R.1 be sustained, an additional \$600 million may be required in FY 2012 to make up for the FY 2011 shortfall in nonproliferation funding.

We would ask that you account for the NNSA funding increase in the 050 budget function for national defense so that we do not again have to make trade-offs between the national security activities of the NNSA and non-security programs in the DOE, as was the result of H.R.1.

We recognize the demands such significant investments will place on our budget, particularly in these challenging economic times, but we also know that we cannot allow these crucial national security activities to be deferred any longer without increasing the risk to the safety, security and reliability of our nuclear deterrent, and without jeopardizing nonproliferation efforts to reduce the risk of nuclear terrorism.

Remarkably, over the past two years a strong bipartisan and bicameral consensus has been forged over the need for nuclear modernization and the corresponding long-term investments, as well as the need to fund nuclear nonproliferation efforts. We have the President's commitment to this investment: "Given the extremely tight budget environment facing the federal government, these requests to the Congress demonstrate the priority the Administration places on maintaining the safety, security, and effectiveness

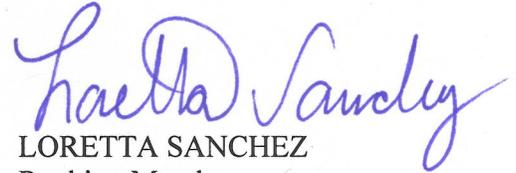
of the deterrent.” We also need the commitment of the Congress: from the budget resolution to the authorization and appropriations bills to the engagement of leadership.

In closing, we appreciate the opportunity to express these views on behalf of the Strategic Forces Subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services. We look forward to working with you and the members of the Committee on the Budget to construct a budget plan that reflects our commitment to sustaining and modernizing our nation’s nuclear deterrent, and to implementing important nuclear threat reductions efforts.

Sincerely,



MICHAEL R. TURNER
Chairman
Subcommittee on Strategic Forces



LORETTA SANCHEZ
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Strategic Forces



TRENT FRANKS



JIM LANGEVIN



DOUG LAMBORN



RICK LARSEN



MO BROOKS



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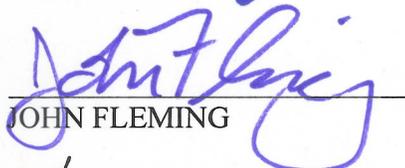
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