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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-6035

ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS

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

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PAUL ARCANGELI, STAFF DIRECTOR

February 8, 2011

Dear Chairman Ryan:

We write to express our concern regarding the potentially dire consequences that the Budget Committee's planned 2011 budget allocation would have on the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), and to seek clarification of what you are including in security spending. The Fiscal Year 2011 (FY11) budget allocations for non-security discretionary spending that you intend to submit to the Congressional Record may negatively affect our nation's nuclear deterrent and disrupting nonproliferation programs that are vital to our national security.

NNSA is responsible for maintaining a safe, secure and reliable arsenal of nuclear weapons and capabilities for deterrence to defend the United States and its allies; reducing the global threat posed by nuclear weapons, nuclear proliferation and unsecured or excess nuclear materials; and providing safe and effective nuclear propulsion for the U.S. Navy.

Despite these important national security missions, the NNSA—which is part of the Department of Energy—may be reduced to FY08 funding levels or less for the remainder of FY11, if it is currently considered “non-security spending.” Although House Resolution 38 does not define “non-security-spending,” the Chairman of the House Rules Committee described it as spending other than defense, military construction, veterans, or homeland security spending. This description would omit NNSA from security spending.

Strengthening nuclear threat reduction efforts remains our first line of defense to reduce the risk of nuclear terrorism. Failing to secure or remove bomb-grade materials where they are most vulnerable will unnecessarily increase the likelihood that terrorists or countries hostile to the United States will acquire a nuclear weapon capability. President Obama has prioritized these urgent efforts, promising to secure all vulnerable fissile material by 2013.

Similarly, maintaining a safe, secure and reliable nuclear deterrent is a national security priority. The Secretary of Defense stated in April 2010, “The United States must make much-needed investments to rebuild our aging nuclear infrastructure, both facilities and personnel” and

the Administration committed \$84 billion over the next decade to modernize the nation's nuclear weapons complex and perform warhead life extension programs. In support of these plans, the House and Senate Armed Services Committees, authorized \$7 billion in FY11 for NNSA Weapons Activities, a considerable increase in spending over the FY08 level, and the Continuing Appropriations Act for FY11 allowed NNSA to spend at its proposed FY11 level.

Furthermore, the U.S. Navy relies on NNSA's Naval Reactors program to provide safe and reliable nuclear reactor plants for its nuclear-powered submarines and aircraft carriers—which constitute 40-percent of the Navy's combatants. As the Navy begins its Ohio-class ballistic missile submarine replacement program, greater demands will be placed on NNSA to design and build a new reactor plant to meet the Navy's requirements.

These three programs underpin important work carried out at the Lawrence Livermore, Los Alamos and Sandia National Laboratories as well as other laboratory and production facilities across the nation. Maintaining workforce stability and the necessary scientific and engineering excellence is critical to maintaining a strong nuclear deterrent and making progress on nonproliferation.

We believe NNSA's responsibilities are germane to our national security. We therefore urge the Budget Committee to clarify and include specific security exemptions for NNSA weapons activities, nonproliferation programs, and naval reactors that are vital to our national security.

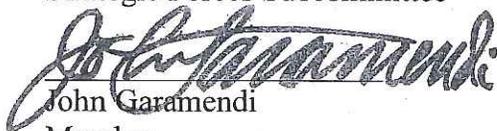
Sincerely,



Loretta Sanchez
Ranking Member,
Strategic Forces Subcommittee



Rick Larsen
Member,
Strategic Forces Subcommittee



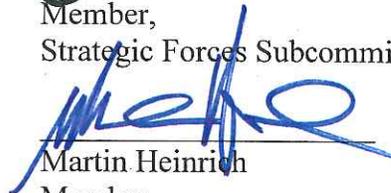
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Member,
Strategic Forces Subcommittee



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Strategic Forces Subcommittee



Jim Langevin
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Strategic Forces Subcommittee



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Strategic Forces Subcommittee