



# Alliance for Nuclear Accountability

*A national network of organizations working to address issues of  
nuclear weapons production and waste cleanup*

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## **Questions for the U.S. Department of Energy FY 2016 Nuclear Weapons and Cleanup Budget Request**

The US nuclear weapons budget continues to spiral out of control. Look for double-digit increases in Department of Energy (DOE) weapons activities. Core nonproliferation programs will be cut because of funding for mixed-oxide fuel. Cleanup of radioactive and toxic pollution from weapons research, testing, production and waste disposal will fall further behind. The DOE budget for FY 2016 will illuminate the Obama Administration's misplaced nuclear priorities.

The Alliance for Nuclear Accountability (ANA), a 28-year-old network of groups from communities downwind and downstream of U.S. nuclear sites, will be looking at the following issues. For details, contact the ANA leaders listed at the end of this Advisory.

-- **Does the budget request boost funding for "modernization" programs that indefinitely maintain nuclear warheads?** Such funding is contrary to the Obama Administration's previously declared goal of a future world free of nuclear weapons.

-- **Does the budget reflect the Administration's commitment to reduce funding (currently \$335 million) on the multi-billion dollar Uranium Processing Facility at Oak Ridge** by downsizing it to the capacity needed to support stockpile surveillance, maintenance and limited life extension?

-- **Does the budget increase funds for nuclear weapons dismantlement capacity? Will cooperative programs with Russia be maintained?**

-- **Is there increased funding for expanded production of plutonium bomb cores?** Why is expanded production needed when expert studies find that existing plutonium pits are durable?

-- **Is more than \$300 million provided for the National Ignition Facility (NIF) at Livermore Lab that has repeatedly failed to achieve "ignition"?** What is the funding level for uncontained plutonium shots although they will taint the NIF target chamber and optics with alpha radiation?

-- **Does the budget seek an increase for the B61 Life Extension Program (currently \$643 million)?**

-- **As DOE affirms that the \$30-billion plutonium fuel (MOX) project at the Savannah River Site is financially unsustainable, is the MOX plant construction again proposed for "cold standby" (~\$200 million) or a level to barely allow it to survive (~300+ million)?** Does the budget include the current validated base-line cost of MOX plant, a validated construction and operation schedule and names of nuclear utilities willing to use experimental MOX fuel?

-- **Does the budget include \$0 for Yucca Mountain?** No funding is consistent with past requests that terminate this technically flawed site that is strongly opposed by Nevada state officials and the public.

-- **Does the budget provide additional Environmental Management (EM) funding (currently \$5 billion) to meet all legally mandated cleanup milestones?** States say cleanup agreements at a dozen major sites are underfunded by hundreds of million dollars.

-- **How will DOE and its contractors pay fines for missing milestones?** In the past three months, the states of New Mexico, Idaho, and Washington have issued fines of tens of millions of dollars, and fines loom in South Carolina. In which other states does DOE face fines and lawsuits for missing milestones?

-- **What is the high range for total life-cycle cleanup costs (LCC) for EM sites?** Because of funding shortfalls, High Range LCC costs have increased from \$308.5 billion in the FY 2013 Budget Request, to \$330.9 billion in the FY 2014 Request, and were \$328.4 billion in the FY 2015 Request.

-- **How much does the budget include for the shut down of the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP)? How much is for recovery and how much for waste emplacement (previously \$220 million a year) even though no waste is being emplaced?** How much additional funding is requested for the Idaho National Lab, Los Alamos, Savannah River, and Oak Ridge because of the shutdown?

-- **Does the budget for Hanford (more than \$2 billion) protect workers from toxic chemical exposures, provide an Operational Readiness Review of the nuclear safety of the Waste Treatment Plant, and fund construction of new double-shell tanks to replace the leaking ones?**

-- **Does the budget increase funding (currently \$28.5 million) for the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DNFSB) to provide independent oversight of DOE projects** because of the many cost overruns, schedule delays, safety culture issues and technical problems?

-- **Is the funding for design and licensing of Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) enough to make them viable?** As private financing is lacking, will DOE reaffirm that it will not finance SMR construction?

**For information about specific DOE nuclear weapons sites and programs, contact:**

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