

Say “No” to More Nuclear Weapons: Public Comments Are Needed on Proposed Expanded Plutonium Pit Production at the Los Alamos Lab and the Savannah River Site

The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), the semi-autonomous nuclear weapons agency within the federal Department of Energy, plans to quadruple the production of plutonium pits, the radioactive cores of nuclear weapons. NNSA plans to produce at least 30 plutonium pits per year at the Los Alamos National Laboratory in northern New Mexico and 50 plutonium pits per year at the Savannah River Site in South Carolina.

Expanded plutonium pit production is a crucial part of the United States’ \$1.7 trillion “modernization” plan to completely rebuild the nuclear weapons stockpile, its supporting research and production complex, and the missiles, subs and bombers to deliver nuclear weapons. This is fueling a new global nuclear arms race that is more dangerous than any time since the height of the Cold War.

Expanded plutonium pit production, costing an estimated \$43 billion over thirty years, is not needed. More than 15,000 existing pits are already stored at NNSA’s Pantex Plant near Amarillo, TX, while independent experts have found that pits last more than a century.

No pit production is scheduled to maintain the safety and reliability of the existing nuclear weapons stockpile. Instead, NNSA plans to produce heavily modified pits for speculative new-design nuclear weapons. This could degrade confidence in stockpile reliability since new plutonium pits can’t be full-scale tested because of an international testing moratorium. In the extreme, it could even prompt the U.S. to resume nuclear weapons testing, which would have severe international proliferation consequences.

To meet public review requirements under the federal National Environmental Policy Act, NNSA completed a “Supplement Analysis” to determine whether existing nation-wide programmatic public review of plutonium pit production should be supplemented or not. NNSA has already decided no!

Tell the National Nuclear Security Administration that a new Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement is required!

Public Comment Opportunity:

Please send your comments by email to NEPA-SRS@srs.gov by August 12, 2019, or as soon thereafter as possible. See suggested comments at <https://nukewatch.org/newsite/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/CT-PEIS-Supp.-Analysis-sample-comments.docx> Please customize them as you see fit before sending, as that is more effective.

For background:

Please see NNSA’s Notice of Availability for public comment on its Supplement Analysis at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2019/06/28/2019-13842/notice-of-availability-of-the-draft-supplement-analysis-of-the-complex-transformation-supplemental> and Nuclear Watch New Mexico’s fact sheet on plutonium pit production at <https://nukewatch.org/newsite/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/PitProductionFactSheet.pdf>