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**WATCHDOG GROUPS CALL FOR NEW ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STUDY  
FOR NUCLEAR BOMB PLANT;  
CITE WORKER AND PUBLIC RISKS, NEW SEISMIC INFORMATION**

The Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance and Nuclear Watch New Mexico today released a letter to Secretary of Energy Ernest Moniz calling for a new Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement for the Y-12 Nuclear Weapons Complex in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Y-12 is a manufacturing plant that produces the thermonuclear cores (secondaries) for US nuclear warheads and bombs.

The letter rejects the analysis prepared by the National Nuclear Security Administration and the subsequent Amended Record of Decision released in August 2016 in which the NNSA gave itself the green light to proceed with construction of the Uranium Processing Facility, a bomb plant originally intended to replace aging facilities.

“The current implementation strategy for the UPF is a substantial change to the 2011 Record of Decision,” the letter states, after noting that the National Environmental Policy Act requires federal agencies to prepare a formal Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement or a new EIS when “there are substantial changes to the proposal or significant new circumstances of information relevant to environmental concerns.”

“This is about safety—protection of workers, the public and the environment,” said OREPA coordinator Ralph Hutchison. “When it comes to nuclear weapons materials, there can be no shortcuts. They have changed their plan significantly, and the law requires them to re-do the environmental analysis. It’s as simple as that.”

The letter also cites new circumstances and new information, including NNSA plans to continue using two circa-1950 buildings for another twenty to thirty years even though they do not meet modern environmental and seismic standards. According to NNSA’s Amended Record of Decision, “the plan is not to bring the long-range Y-12 Enriched Uranium facilities to current seismic standards.” NNSA cites “prohibitive” costs as the reason they will continue to subject workers and the public to levels of risk that are unacceptable by today’s standards.

“They are gambling with lives, with the environment, and with their own mission capabilities,” said Hutchison. “We have safety codes for a reason, and ignoring them is not an option.”

The watchdog groups are not the only ones concerned; their letter cites concerns of the independent Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board about the plan to rely on aging, dangerous facilities indefinitely.

In 2011, NNSA declared its intent to build a new, large, multipurpose Enriched Uranium facility called the Uranium Processing Facility. Since then, massive cost overruns, dramatic management incompetence and an ever-receding construction schedule have forced the

agency to develop a new plan. The new "UPF" will include five new buildings and the continued use of two unsafe, deteriorating buildings. Total costs are unknown, as NNSA refuses to release cost estimates or data, some estimates range as high as \$15 billion.

Jay Coghlan, Nuclear Watch New Mexico Director, commented: "The Uranium Processing Facility is the tip-of-the-spear for the trillion dollar "modernization" of U.S. nuclear forces that will fleece the American taxpayer. It will enrich the usual fat cat defense contractors by keeping nuclear weapons forever while rebuilding them to give them new military capabilities. The public has the legal right to review planned changes to the deeply troubled Uranium Processing facility, which we seek to enforce."

The National Environmental Policy Act governs the preparation of Environmental Impact Studies. Engagement of the public throughout the process is at the foundation of NEPA. But the NNSA, since it was forced to abandon its 2011 plan, has conducted its planning in secret; watchdogs have been forced to file Freedom of Information Act requests for reports and plans.

OREPA and Nuclear Watch asked the Secretary of Energy to respond within thirty days.

for more information

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The letter to Secretary Moniz can be found here.

<<http://orepa.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/OREPA-NWNM-2016-ltr-to-Moniz-re-UPF.pdf>>