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COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-6035

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

July 18, 2013

ROBERT L. SIMMONS, II, STAFF DIRECTOR

Ms. Alison L. Doone
Deputy Chief Financial Officer
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Ms. Doone:

The Committee on Armed Services continues its review of the Department of Energy's (DOE) proposed reprogramming of \$120 million from the Nuclear Facility portion of the Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Replacement Project (CMRR-NF, Project 04-D-125). The committee has received several communications from the Department of Energy and the Department of Defense on this matter and believes that the Administration is making progress—albeit insufficient and long-delayed progress—towards answering the concerns described by the committee in my letter of October 1, 2012 and in subsequent discussions.

Due to this progress, the committee has no objection to the Department of Energy reprogramming \$50 million of this funding to ensure continued progress at the Los Alamos National Laboratory and continued work to evaluate the so-called modular strategy, provided that the Administration, acting through the Nuclear Weapons Council, submits a detailed spend plan for this \$50 million prior to obligating the funds. The committee expects this level of funding will enable DOE, for the next several months, to begin carrying out steps towards a permanent plutonium capability for the nation.

The committee continues to defer decision on the remaining \$70 million of the proposed reprogramming until its outstanding concerns are resolved. For the committee to approve the remaining funds, the committee expects the Nuclear Weapons Council to provide details on its evaluation of options and commit to immediately undertake a permanent plutonium capability solution that is aligned with the requirements of section 3114 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 (Public Law 112-239). The committee believes such work should include significant effort in FY13 and FY14.

The committee expects the Department of Energy and the Department of Defense, acting through the Nuclear Weapons Council, to move expeditiously to firmly commit to a permanent

Ms. Alison L. Doone
July 18, 2013
Page 2

solution to the nation's plutonium needs that meets the requirements of the military and the nuclear stockpile by creating a pit production capacity of 50 – 80 pits by 2026. Continued delay in selecting and fully committing to a permanent plutonium strategy will have significant impacts on the nation's ability to execute warhead life extension programs and provide a responsive nuclear weapons infrastructure.

I look forward to continued progress on this matter by the Administration, and look forward to working with the Administration to ensure a permanent and robust plutonium capability is implemented.

Sincerely,



Howard P. "Buck" McKeon
Chairman

HPM:dw

cc: The Honorable Frank Kendall, Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisitions, Technology and Logistics
General C. Robert Kehler, USAF, Commander, U.S. Strategic Command
Mr. Edward Bruce Held, Acting Administrator, National Nuclear Security Administration
The Honorable James N. Miller, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy
Admiral James A. "Sandy" Winnefeld, Jr., Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
The Honorable Robert F. Hale, Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) and CFO