

NNSA's pit production PEIS process: an opportunity if we remain grounded in longer-term resistance, fellowship, truth

Slides for discussions, April 26 & 27, 2026; see also [The Accelerating Nuclear Arms Race -- What We Can Do](#), April 14, 2026

"Only he who knows the empire of might and knows how not to respect it is capable of love and justice."
(Simone Weil, "The Iliad, Poem of Force")

"Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never has and it never will. Find out just what a people will submit to, and you have found out the exact amount of injustice and wrong which will be imposed upon them..." (Frederick Douglass)

"For New Mexicans, we're seeing a strategic pivot with respect to the role that DOE and NNSA play in our state. And that strategic pivot is moving toward greater nuclear weapons arsenals production...at the expense of environmental cleanup..." (James Kenney, NMED Secretary, *Albuquerque Journal*, 4/23/26)



Los Alamos Study Group, 2901 Summit Place NE, Albuquerque, NM 87106
www.lasg.org, 505-265-1200



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Blog: <https://lasg.org/wordpress/>

The bottom line up front (I):

- **Building on a foundation prepared since Obama, this Trump administration is accelerating the development, production – and soon, increased number – of nuclear weapons systems, including nuclear warheads.**
- **This is part of a U.S. pivot toward increased militarization, wars, and continued rising federal debt service. International law and diplomacy are being eviscerated in favor of hybrid and kinetic war.**
- **New Mexico is the U.S. warhead capital and site of \$10.4/27.4 billion (B; FY27 requested dollars) in warhead spending (38% of U.S. total). Per dollar GDP, NM is 8 times as nuclear-warhead-oriented as any other state. Direct warhead spending ~ 7% of GDP; total GDP contribution likely to be at least 12%.**
- **LANL is best-funded warhead facility in the world. New mission: making warhead cores (“pits”). Pit budget for FY27 90% more than FY26; to be 36% of total DOE at LANL.**
- **LANL has expanded dramatically, beyond any rational size.**
- **Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) for pit production public hearings (5) are coming. The most important two are in SC (May 5, virtual/in-person) and NM (Santa Fe, May 14, virtual/in-person), both 5-8 pm local time.**

The bottom line up front (II):

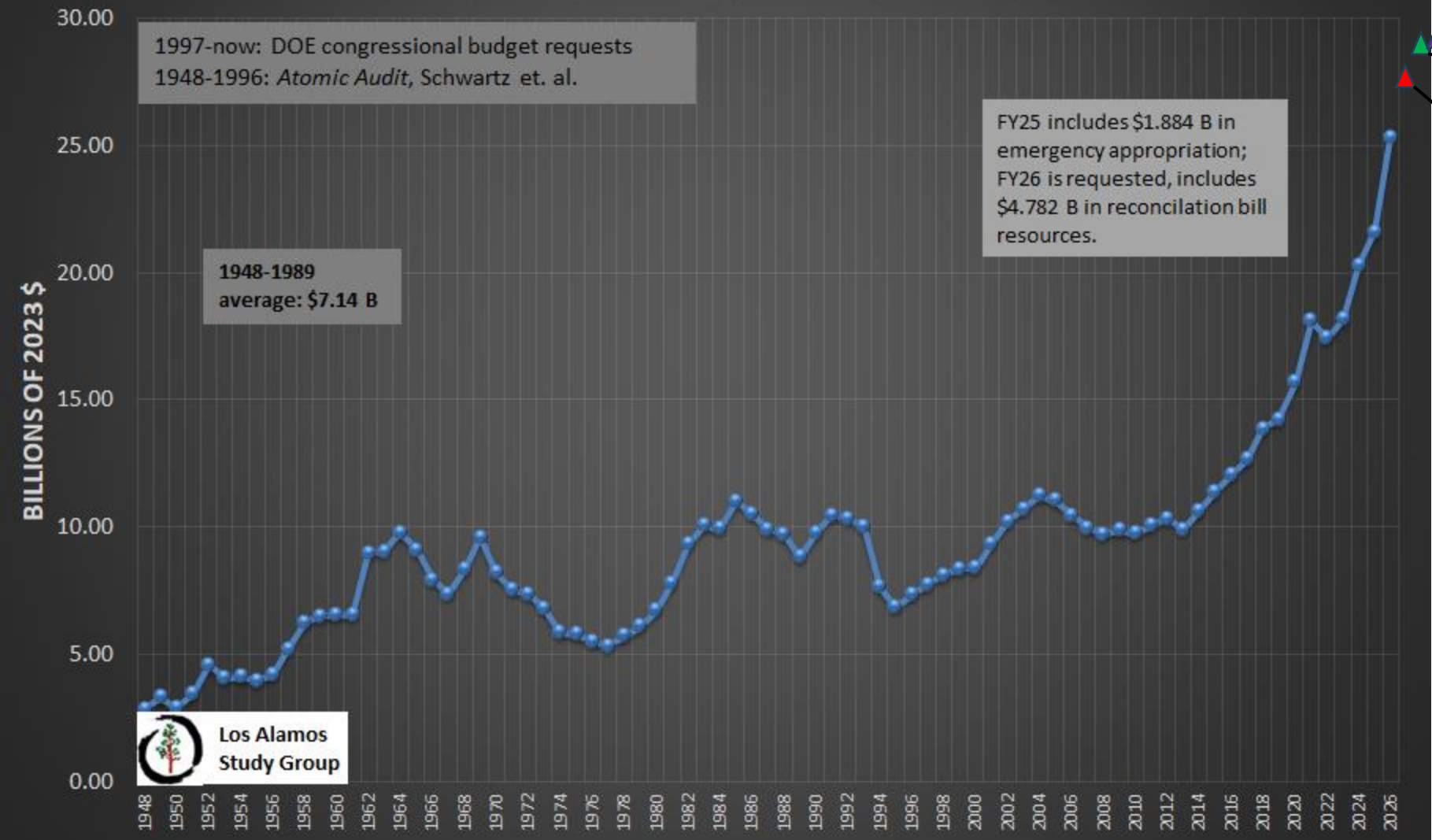
- Only LANL can produce pits in the next decade. Only LANL pits can enable brand-new warheads in that timeframe. LANL pit production is for attempting global domination. Which will fail.
- Congress and NNSA will create adequate pit production capacity. LANL cannot make enough pits to support the U.S. arsenal. SRS can. If LANL produces, SC must also. If SC produces, LANL production isn't needed.
- Pit “recycling”/reuse are irrelevant to the perceived need to acquire pit production capability.
- These hearings will be useful if we make them so. Otherwise, they won't be. Creativity is warranted.
- There is long-standing organic opposition to pit production in NM. There is almost none in South Carolina. SC wants pits, as numerous local resolutions attest.
- It is possible to delay, slow and stop the nuclear arms race.
- We should clearly oppose all (*not* “expanded”) pit production now. There is no need for it. That means stopping it at Los Alamos, not SC. Production at SC won't start until at least 2035. To start your resistance, endorse [StopTheBomb.org](https://www.stb.org).

Quick overviews & background

- [Nuclear Weapons Modernization: Current Articles and Issues](#) (Study Group)
- Nuclear Matters Handbooks: [2020 revised](#); [2020](#)
- [FY 2025 SSMP](#), Biennial Plan Summary, Sep 2024; [FY 2024 SSMP](#), Nov 2023 (FY2026)
- <https://thebulletin.org/premium/2026-03/united-states-nuclear-weapons-2026/>
- [Projected Costs of U.S. Nuclear Forces, 2025 to 2034](#), Apr 2025
- FY2027 NNSA budget request: [Overview](#); [Weapons Activities](#); [Laboratory Tables](#); [State Tables](#)
- Other resources at [https://lasg.org/budget/NNSA Planning Budgeting.html](https://lasg.org/budget/NNSA_Planning_Budgeting.html)
- **[Read our press releases of this year. Read \(and use!\) our print media advertising.](#)**

- New launch platforms (Columbia, Sentinel, B-21, F-35) for sea, air, and land
- New and modernized missiles (Trident D5, LRSO, SLCM-N, others following) (DoD)
- New and modernized warheads and reentry vehicles (NNSA and NNSA/DoD)
- Future concepts (two new warheads expected to enter program this year)
- Others expected to follow shortly
- New infrastructure for DoD (Sentinel, shipyards)
- New infrastructure for NNSA (plutonium, uranium, lithium, tritium, non-nuclear, assembly/disassembly, storage, support, much more)
- Rapid capabilities program at NNSA
- New C3I (command, control, communications, intelligence)
- New security requirements
- AI integration for rapid realization of new concepts
- Continued massive workforce recruitment and expansion across DoD and NNSA contractors, direct and indirect

AEC/ERDA/DOE/NNSA Annual Spending for Nuclear Weapons Research, Development, Testing, and Production: NNSA Weapons Activities with administrative costs included; constant 2025\$; ≥FY26 requested, in then-year \$. Updated 6/3/25.



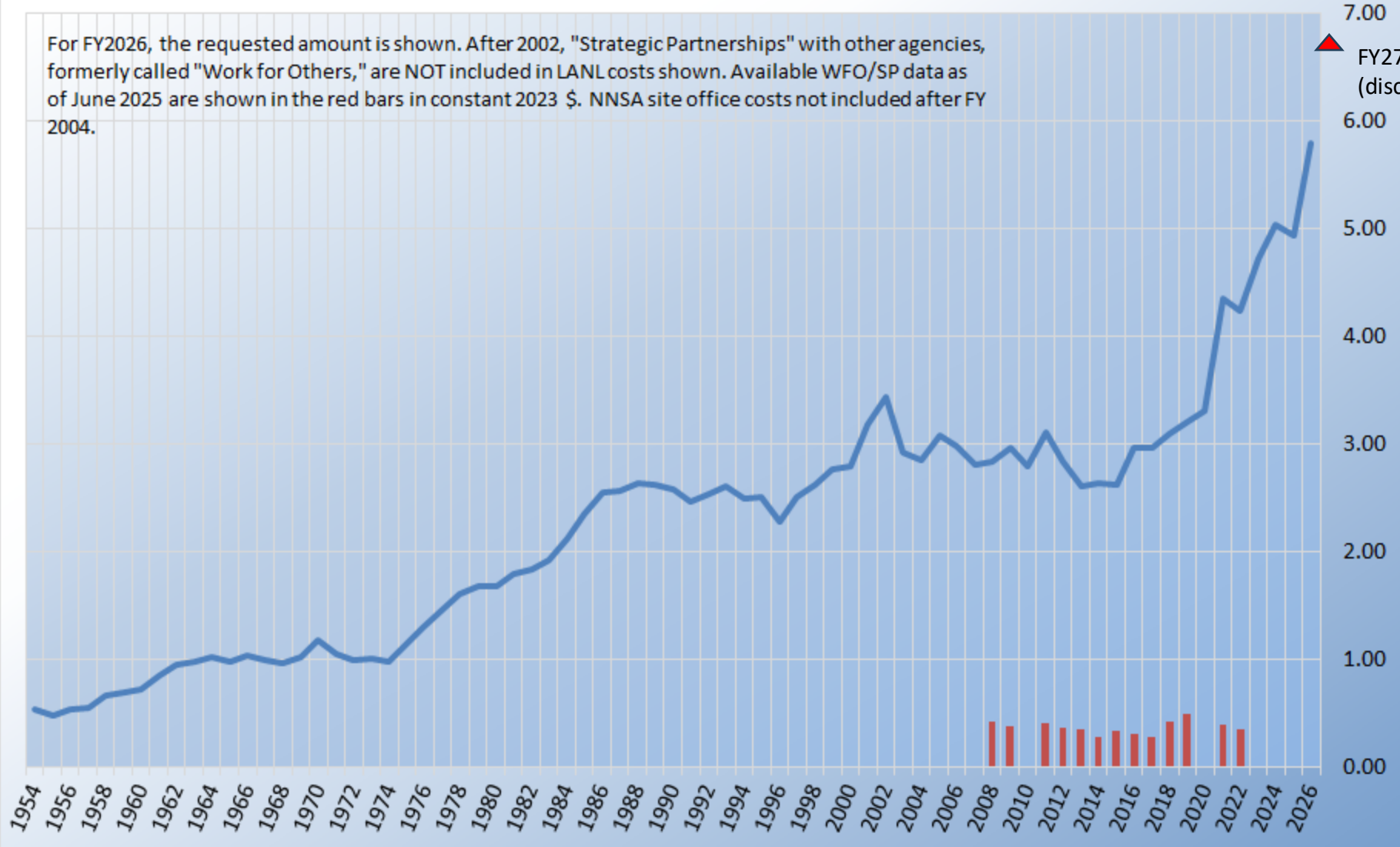
\$27.9 B requested for FY27 (discretionary)

Actual FY26: \$24.8 B total, including \$3.9 B reconciliation

Los Alamos National Laboratory Costs Incurred by Fiscal Year, billions of 2025 dollars

Los Alamos Study Group, June 27, 2025

For FY2026, the requested amount is shown. After 2002, "Strategic Partnerships" with other agencies, formerly called "Work for Others," are NOT included in LANL costs shown. Available WFO/SP data as of June 2025 are shown in the red bars in constant 2023 \$. NNSA site office costs not included after FY 2004.



NNSA's pit PEIS process: what it is and is not

- Required by National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) as rightly interpreted by Judge Lewis in SC lawsuit (1:21-cv-01942-MGL) to require nationwide analysis of the two-factory pit plan of 2018 (and formally under NEPA, 2020).
- Alternatives offered are somewhat constrained by:
 - Statutory requirements, especially 50 U.S. Code § 2538a and P.L. 119–60 Section 3112.
 - Site and facility realities at LANL in particular; SRS is not so limited
 - The “No Action Alternative” is not really supported by prior NEPA analyses contra NNSA. This is a *physical* as well as a procedural/legal problem. Decisions were made based on make-believe and reality is otherwise.
 - A recent NNSA directive ([Beck, 2/11/26](#)), as well as the mysterious “[Project Velocity](#),” purport to expand the pit production rate at LANL beyond statutory requirements and what is analyzed in the LANL SWEIS.
 - Alternatives and decisions can change after this process concludes, using the same PEIS.
 - Statutory requirements do not nullify NEPA but do strongly influence what the agency believes is realistic.
 - Statutory requirements as well as executive branch requirements can and do change.
 - This PEIS “wallows” sloppily across these rather prescriptive requirements and realities. It is not a bad effort.
- The process: scoping hearing & comment period; **draft PEIS hearings** & comment period; final PEIS, ROD, and future ARODs. These hearings are possibly the ONLY hearings there will be on pit production, NNSA's largest program.
- This process is largely disconnected from the policy-setting process in *direct* terms. While decisionmakers are not listening much in a direct way, in a broader, indirect, and more subtle sense they *are* listening, as are the professional story-tellers who will reach them.
- **All in all, these hearings can be useful if we make them so.**

Current legality and feasibility of NNSA's Pit Production PEIS Alternatives – *but things can and do change*

Los Alamos Study Group 4/26/26

Alternative/site	Currently legal?	Feasible?	Notes
“No Action” at both sites			
At LANL (≥ 30 ppy, surge ≤ 80 ppy); <i>construction only</i> at SRS, not operation	Yes but only with ROD (or later AROD) for operation of SRS at ≥ 50 ppy	Unknown	Mere construction at SRS does not create the “capability” required by the FY26 NDAA; this can be remedied by an amended ROD (AROD) later allowing SRS operation. Meanwhile LANL’s ability to reliably produce pits $> \sim 10$ ppy is unknown, even in the short run; ≥ 80 ppy by 2030 is required by law but enduring 80 ppy at LANL is infeasible (NNSA, S-12)
The “Multiple Sites” Alternative			
• Maximum (LANL 80 ppy, SRS 125 ppy)	Yes	No	Enduring 80 ppy at LANL infeasible (NNSA, S-12). SRS at 125 ppy is however feasible.
• Medium (“steady state:” LANL ≥ 30 ppy, SRS ≥ 50 ppy)	Yes	Unknown	LANL’s ability to reliably produce pits $> \sim 10$ ppy is unknown, even in the short run.
• Lowest (“capability based”: LANL 10 ppy, SRS 50 ppy)	Not now, or should we say, “not yet?”	Yes	LANL surely can produce $\leq \sim 10$ ppy, which NNSA says is enough to maintain “capability,” but presumably only after a 30 ppy demonstration. Capability of 50 ppy at SRS needs SRS operation. Does not meet 80 ppy requirement, but this could change.
Two “Single Site” Alternatives			
• All at LANL (≥ 80 ppy)	No	No	SRS capability at ≥ 50 ppy required by the FY26 NDAA, which requires actual SRS production at that level (NNSA, S-12); enduring 80 ppy at LANL infeasible (NNSA, S-12)
• “All” at SRS (50-125 ppy), but LANL retains ~ 10 ppy	Not now (or not yet)	Yes	Legal if 30 ppy LANL capability is demonstrated and maintained on standby, requiring ~ 10 ppy for that (NNSA, S-12)

To understand and act within the framework given we need a broad perspective (I)

- This is the largest nuclear weapons program in the U.S. since the Cold War. Total acquisition cost at two sites ~\$50 billion (B). At LANL, at least \$30 B, with more than half yet to go. (See [this](#), not yet updated this year.)
- New pits are needed *only* for new warheads and bombs. New warheads and bombs are not needed to maintain a credible nuclear deterrent, to the extent nuclear deterrence is even a “thing.” New pits are needed right now only if the U.S. is investing in an arm race with Russia and China.
- Pit production (P2) is closely linked to the geopolitical ambitions that led to Venezuela coup, the heavily-provoked Ukraine War, and now the Iran War. The *raison d’etre* of accelerated production, NNSA says, is nuclear domination.
- Thus, what happens in this program and specifically at LANL has global implications right now.
- P2 is closely linked to the FY26 \$1+ trillion (T) and the FY27 proposed \$1.5 T military budgets. Accelerated P2 is impossible (and unnecessary) without these huge budgets.
- Pit production to maintain or replace U.S. warheads *will* be needed later, assuming those warheads exist. How *much* later is warhead-specific and uncertain. It takes a long time to build a pit factory, but Congress and the Executive can only act *now*. They *will* choose to build what they see as at least one adequate, enduring factory.
- This is not just Trump’s baby, but it is Trump’s baby right now. It is the Trump WH that is allowing this acceleration.
- Only LANL can produce pits in the next decade and so enable brand-new warheads in that timeframe in that way.
- New Mexicans have successfully delayed pit production for three decades. We should be conscious and proud of this tradition.
- Huge military budgets impoverish and kill, as do the weapons. Opportunity costs are not less than the whole U.S., possibly the world. The PEIS is thus a small part of a much bigger picture.

To understand and act within the PEIS framework given we need a broad perspective (II)

- We need to also think in terms of:
 - The structures of resistance, and our potential personal rewards in that resistance. We need to find ways to expand *Funktionslust** in resistance. We need more art, personal authenticity, *parrhesia* (candid speech), and more objective truth. With these, we can expand our ability to reach across political barriers. (*"the innate, self-rewarding satisfaction of doing what one is meant to do;" similar to *flow*.)
 - Vocations, our own and others, which amplify the duration of the present moment and protect it from the vicissitudes of circumstance.
 - Enduring fellowship and community, which will need to be mostly based in the positive (constructive) program we hardly ever articulate.
 - A longer arc of history as well as immediate concerns. Where is New Mexico going? Where is this country going? As Sec. Kenney rightly said, New Mexico is at a "strategic pivot." Where is Los Alamos going? We should not worry about a scientists' "trail of tears" (Weida).
 - The truth-finding, truth-telling, and authentic nonviolent actions that will deny success to NNSA at LANL in particular. Consider this a short-term task. They will continue until forced to stop by something, or some people.
 - Our fellow humans in the labs, NNSA, and subcontractors as well as the usual suspects in Congress and the Executive. They are not the enemy.
- LANL P2 is about global domination, and the wars. P2 is Trump's largest program in NNM. (We have not calculated the impact of proposed cuts in social programs.) The LANL P2 budget just jumped 90% to \$2.4 B, and that jump has Trump's fingerprints. If you want to oppose Trump's agenda, here it is, in this giant program.

Don't forget: there is an organic local, and in the past, official opposition here:

- [NM local govt resolutions & letters re: nuclear weapons & plutonium pit production at LANL](#)
- [Opposition from NM elected officials, UC, LANL, & NNSA to industrial pit production at LANL 1992 – 2006](#)

Vs:

- [South Carolina & Georgia government resolutions in favor of pit production at SRS](#)

And then there is [StopTheBomb.org](#), which loves to find and proudly display new supporters! You and your team can help!

- [Individuals](#), and especially [Businesses, Organizations, and Religious Groups](#) who have endorsed the “Call for Sanity, Not Nuclear Production” as of 21 Apr 2026

Coming soon:

- A new billboard on I-25 (“For the children.”)
- A new *Santa Fe Reporter* double-page ad (May 6)
- The LASG summer program – ask about it if you think you might want to be involved!

Some useful insights as we go forward (discuss as needed)

- **Congress and DoD have no intention of decreasing the size of the U.S. nuclear arsenal (3,700 active warheads). If anything, they want to increase it. This has been the pattern over 4 administrations. NNSA will select a P2 strategy based on current policy, not our disarmament wishes.**
- **Pit aging is not the only reason NNSA wants to make pits. NNSA has some “good” reasons.**
- **Right now, there is no need to make pits. But given the size of the arsenal and the uncertainties of how it will age in future decades, by circa 2040 there will be. That is why NNSA cannot stop SRPPF in SC.**
- **LANL cannot make enough pits to support any U.S. arsenal that Congress, NNSA, and DoD can foresee.**
- **For this reason alone, NNSA will build SRPPF. NNSA explains this in the PEIS.**
- **In this PEIS, NNSA opens the door to -- theoretically -- closing LANL pit production down to 10 ppy.**
- **NNSA cannot afford to run two pit factories indefinitely. At some future time far or near, NNSA will shut down LANL's.**
- **We believe opposing pit production here and now is better in every way than opposing it somewhere else 10-15 years in the future. We must choose now, because DoD, NNSA and Congress will choose now. We can choose to accept a huge nuclear weapons program supporting the global empire, in violation of the NPT, in our own backyard right now – or not.**
- **“Pit reuse” is already policy. The extent to which it might be applied to the question of whether to build an adequate, enduring pit factory is zero. All pits age, including the ones in storage.**

Key vulnerabilities in the nuclear weapons establishment

- Us, and our active recognition that *the present is a very positive historical moment for us.*
- Its direct and indirect workforce: its quality, quantity, morale, and retention
- Its infrastructure (site and regional) in selected cases (e.g. LANL)
- Its inherent immorality and illogic, its overall illegality, its untruthfulness or need for political secrecy
- Its tendency to overreach due to greed and complacency, in programs, budgets, and military commitments. Its plans are unsustainable.
- Its structurally poor management; the “need to feed” contractors
- Supply chain issues
- Safety and security issues
- Powerful external factors, altogether or somewhat beyond our control, examples:
 - The inexorable economic decline of the U.S., accelerated by Iran War
 - Resistance to empire by other states (e.g. but not limited to Russia, Iran, China)
 - Domestic political unrest and social instability (e.g.: >\$11,200 per household for the military + nuclear, not including extra for wars, and not including past military, i.e. veterans affairs)
 - Weather and climate-related regional disasters and specific events impacting facilities
 - Other natural disasters (e.g. earthquakes)
- Electoral vulnerabilities down the line, but don't count on Dems making things better.
- (Site-specific vulnerabilities, e.g. at LANL especially)

As NNSA saw it, a couple of years ago:

Table E-1. The nuclear security industrial base risk factors

Human Capital Gaps	Industry is unable to hire or retain U.S. workers with the necessary skill sets
Sole Source Vendors	Only one supplier is qualified to provide the required capability and/ or product
Constrained Market	Capacity is unavailable in required quantities or time due to competing market demands
Product Security	Lack of cyber and physical protection results in eroding integrity and confidence
Sunset Technologies	Product or material obsolescence resulting from decline in relevant suppliers
Foreign Dependency	Domestic industry does not produce the product, or does not produce in sufficient quantities
Eroding Infrastructure	Loss of specialized capital equipment needed to integrate, manufacture, or maintain capability
Regulatory Changes	Labor, environmental, transportation, etc., laws outpace industry's ability to develop alternative processes
Inflation	Changes to the global market causing uncertainty in suppliers pricing models thereby increase costs in material, labor, and freight over a short period of time
Global Events	Both manmade and natural events such as the war in Ukraine and the COVID-19 pandemic that negatively impact the supplies of critical goods and services

COVID-19 = Coronavirus Disease 2019