

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-2107**  
March 8, 2012

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The Honorable Michael Turner  
2454 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Turner:

Thank you for your February 15, 2012, letter regarding H.R. 3974, the Smarter Approach to Nuclear Expenditures (SANE) Act of 2012. In the SANE Act, I propose cancelling two planned Department of Energy National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) facilities: the Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Replacement (CMRR) Nuclear Facility at the Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico and the Uranium Processing Facility (UPF) at the Y-12 Security Complex in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. I would like to clarify why I included these cancellations in H.R. 3974.

The photographs you include in your letter show the current Chemistry and Metallurgy Research (CMR) Building. In a matter of months, the CMR will likely be mostly vacated. Throughout 2012, NNSA plans to transfer many functions and workers that are currently housed in the CMR Building to the brand new CMRR Radiological Laboratory/Utility/Office Building (RLUOB), which should be fully operational by next month. Other functions, including the nuclear functions, which will not be moved to the new RLUOB, could be moved to other existing Los Alamos facilities, such as the PF-4 building, or facilities at other sites. Given budget constraints we face, we do not need to spend up to \$5 billion in taxpayer dollars to build a new nuclear facility.

In fact, the NNSA and the labs themselves acknowledge that the existing infrastructure is adequate:

“Construction has not begun on the nuclear facility. NNSA has determined, in consultation with the national laboratories, that the existing infrastructure in the nuclear complex has the inherent capacity to provide adequate support for these missions. Studies are ongoing to determine long-term requirements. NNSA will modify existing facilities, and relocate some nuclear materials... In place of the CMRR Nuclear Facility for plutonium chemistry, NNSA will maximize use of the recently constructed Radiological Laboratory and Utility Office Building [RLUOB] that will be fully equipped in April 2012, approximately one year ahead of schedule.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> DoE NNSA FY 2013 Congressional Budget Request

The CMRR Nuclear Facility would also accelerate the rate at which we can produce plutonium pits, the fissile core of nuclear warheads, from the current rate of about 20 pits per year to about 80 pits per year. At a time when the Senate and President have formally committed to reducing our nuclear stockpile, it makes no sense to spend up to \$5 billion to expand our capacity to produce components of nuclear weapons.

In H.R. 3974, I also propose cancelling the UPF at Oak Ridge. Building 9212, the facility the UPF would replace, is currently undergoing upgrades that will extend the life of the building until at least 2022.<sup>1</sup> These upgrades address the kinds of systems shown in the photographs enclosed in your letter – steam stations, cooling water distribution systems, ventilation systems, vacuum pumps, and electrical infrastructure like switchgear, motor control centers, transformers, and breakers. These upgrades, which I support, reflect the need to ensure that workers are safe and the building itself operates properly.

The NNSA has concluded that Building 9212 can be sufficiently upgraded for a total of \$100-120 million, and plans to spend \$76 million to upgrade the facility through FY 2016.<sup>2</sup> Given the budget constraints we currently face as a nation, we do not need to spend up to \$7.5 billion to build a brand new facility.<sup>3</sup>

Just as homeowners with tight budgets would choose to renovate a home that meets their needs at a tiny fraction of the cost of building a new home, the government should do the same: we ought to update the facility that already meets our needs rather than building one at approximately 75 times the cost. While Building 9212 will one day need to be replaced, UPF is the wrong solution at the wrong time.

The planned UPF would also create a long-term mission for large stocks of highly enriched uranium to be available for the production of up to 80 new secondaries per year. Secondaries are added to single-stage nuclear weapons to create a thermonuclear explosion. At a time when we have committed to reducing our stockpile of nuclear weapons, this massive investment in a facility to produce components for new nuclear weapons would be not be prudent.

Thank you for your consideration of this letter. I am sure that we can agree that for the economic and national security of our country, we must modernize our nuclear complex to reflect the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Sincerely,



Edward J. Markey

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<sup>2</sup> Stockpile Stewardship and Management Plan released in May 2010, the Y-12 Ten Year Site Plan published in March 2009; 2009 Y12 Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement; "Deciding Not to Build it", Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance, December 2010

<sup>3</sup> "UPF Could Cost Up to \$7.5 Billion", Knox News, July 7, 2011