

# Citizen's Watch



## Warning on Pu Expansion in Hill Meetings

Tri-Valley CAREs' Executive Director Marylia Kelley headed to Washington, DC in late January to meet with colleague organizations and policymakers to make the case that expanded plutonium pit production will fuel a growing new nuclear arms race. Marylia and colleagues also shared internal National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) and other documents showing the plan is prohibitively expensive and fraught with technical challenges.

Jay Coghlan, Executive Director of Nuclear Watch New Mexico and Tri-Valley CAREs' Senior Policy Consultant Kathy Crandall Robinson joined Marylia for a dozen meetings with congressional offices and Administration officials.

We had the opportunity to speak with key new congressional staff and offices, and to discuss strategy with members where we have already developed strong relationships. For example, we had a great meeting in Congressman John Garamendi's office (D-CA-3) and are pleased to report that he remains committed to challenging expanded pit production. We also had very fruitful meetings with Democratic staff for both the Senate and House Armed Services Committees and others.

A highlight of the DC trip was a policy briefing and discussion, "The Pitfalls of Plutonium Pits," organized by Stephen Young of the Union of Concerned Scientists and hosted by Chris Hanson, Democratic professional staff on the Senate Energy and Water Appropriations subcommittee, through which the nuclear weapons budget must pass. Special thanks are due to Chris Hanson for his insightful participation - and for securing the Dirksen Senate hearing room for the briefing.

Even with a declared snow emergency that shut down Congress, twenty people participated in the briefing and the lively discussion that followed, including five key congressional staff and good representation from the DC arms control and disarmament community.

Marylia Kelley started off the panel presentations by noting that although plans for expanded pit production are "not on the 6 O'clock news" they are nonetheless devastating to arms control and disarmament. She especially emphasized how pit production is intertwined with planned new weapons development and pressures to resume nuclear explosive testing in Nevada.

Plans to produce at least 80 pits per year at two facilities (Los Alamos and Savannah River Site) would ensure that the United States is in the nuclear weapons production business forever and able to produce pits for warheads with new military capabilities.



Marylia spoke to the ways in which new, industrial-scale pit production would provide the means for weapons designers to add new bombs and warheads to the arsenal, moving the U.S. further from the disarmament we seek and into uncharted new weapon design territory fraught with peril. Production of new-design pits for new warheads creates scientific uncertainty as these novel additions don't trace back to a "pedigree" of already-tested designs. This uncertainty will create pressure to resume nuclear testing in Nevada. It is clear that other nuclear-armed nations would follow suit.

Marylia further explained that pit production is being driven by the development of the W78 warhead replacement (to sit atop a new ICBM) now to be called the W87-1 warhead, which is being designed at Livermore Lab to be markedly different than its namesake. One key change is that this new warhead is being designed with a novel untested shape for its plutonium pit (thus requiring expanded pit production).

If this name-change game for the new warhead seems confusing, it is. For instance, there are already W87 warheads in the arsenal that have been successfully refurbished without changing their design. For simplicity, however, we will call this new-design beast the W87-1 warhead because that is the name NNSA has chosen for it.

Marylia closed her presentation noting the necessity to terminate this plan quickly before it further undermines arms control and disarmament and puts our public health, environmental safety and national treasury at risk.

Jay Coghlan's presentation emphasized the ways in which NNSA's plans for pit production run afoul of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Jay covered the value of NEPA's technical analysis and public participation elements. Jay discussed the importance of congressional and public insistence on the crucial need and legal imperative for NNSA to conduct a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) analyzing the impacts of

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## Alert... *Cont. from Page 4*

sponsors, including Sen. Dianne Feinstein of California.

This bill addresses the need for checks and balances that are presently lacking. Call your Representative and your Senators and ask them to co-sponsor H.R. 669 (House) and S. 200 (Senate). To check the full co-sponsor list, go to [Congress.gov](http://Congress.gov) and type in the bill numbers. Please thank the offices that have co-sponsored.

3. Rep. Adam Smith (D-WA-9) and Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) have introduced a bill to **Establish the Policy of No First Use of Nuclear Weapons**. In the House the bill is **H.R. 921**, and in the Senate it is **S. 272**. This bill has garnered 17 co-sponsors in the House including 6 from California (Lieu, Garamendi, Khanna, Lofgren, DeSaulnier, and Thompson). In the Senate it has 4 co-sponsors, including California's Senator Dianne Feinstein.

H.R. 921 and S. 272 are complementary to the restricting first use act – but also unique. The text of this bill is one-line: "It is the policy of the United States to not use nuclear weapons first."

Indeed, if you poll the general public, many believe that is U.S. policy, but it is not so. This bill seeks to remedy that situation and establish that the U.S. will not be the first to launch a nuclear weapon. Many of the same elected officials are on both bills, which makes sense. The full co-sponsor list is at [congress.gov](http://congress.gov).

Your call can gather more Senators and Reps to join one or both of these measures today. Again, if your Rep. or Senators are already on this particular bill, please call and say thank you.

The capitol switchboard is (202) 224-3121. Please make these calls ASAP.

*If you would like to know about other bills and opportunities to create change in U.S. nuclear and foreign policy, come to the next TVC monthly meeting or give us a holler.*

*We appreciate all that you do for peace, justice and a healthy environment. Together we will create lasting change!*

## Promoting Enviro Justice for our Communities

Tri-Valley CAREs' board president, Mary Perner (right), and bilingual community organizer, Raiza Marciscano-Bettis (left), met in Tracy recently with newly-elected Congressman Josh Harder (D-CA-10) (center) to discuss our members' environmental justice concerns regarding the Livermore Lab's Site 300 high explosives testing range, which is located near Tracy in the 10th Congressional District.



In particular, Raiza and Mary outlined our concerns about Livermore Lab's refusal to provide Spanish language translations or community involvement opportunities as mandated by EPA guidelines in the Superfund cleanup of toxic and radioactive materials in the soil and water at Site 300.

Mary and Raiza also discussed our objections to the huge open-air bomb blasts planned at Site 300. Opposition to this project includes the City of Tracy, the San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors and the Tracy Hills developer, among others. Thousands of residents signed our petition to stop the project, and many also provided comments and spoke at a public hearing last year.

Rep. Harder indicated his support for Tri-Valley CAREs' goals to engage and empower the Tracy area community. He pledged to work with us to carry out these goals. Rep. Harder was knowledgeable on the subject of Site 300 and showed an avid interest about what mattered to us.

We appreciate Rep. Harder's attention to these major environmental justice issues that directly impact our communities.

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## Doomsday Clock Remains at 2-Mins to Midnight

The resurgent risks of nuclear war and unresolved climate danger have caused the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists to keep the Doomsday Clock set at 2-minutes to the apocalyptic midnight hour in what the magazine's scientists and scholars, including 15 Nobel Laureates, decried as "the new abnormal."

The minute hand did not move from last year, but that position is the closest to annihilation it has ever been. "The fact the Doomsday Clock's hands did not change is bad news," said Robert Rosner, Chair of the Bulletin's Science and Security Board.

Before 2018, the last time the Clock was set at 2-minutes to doom was in 1953, marking the first time both the Soviet Union and the United States possessed the ability to use powerful Hydrogen bombs.

We have returned to the greatest danger the world had ever known. The Bulletin's statement noted that the "modernization" of arsenals currently underway in the U.S. and other nuclear-armed states is "all but indistinguishable from a worldwide arms race."

Jerry Brown, our former California Governor and now Executive Chairman of the Bulletin, put it this way at the news conference, "The blindness and stupidity of politicians and their consultants is truly shocking in the face of nuclear catastrophe and danger." Brown continued, "We are almost like travelers on the Titanic, seeing the iceberg up ahead but enjoying the elegant dining and the music."

Moreover, the Bulletin said "the world failed dismally last year" to address climate change. "To halt the worst effects of climate change, the countries of the world must cut net worldwide carbon dioxide emissions to zero by well before the end of the century."

The Trump administration's nuclear and climate policies contributed to the decision to keep the hands so close to midnight noted the scientists. The Bulletin also said the "corruption of the information ecosystem" is embrittling democracy and adding to the global risks.

The iconic Doomsday Clock was founded in 1947.

# Plutonium... *Cont. from Page 1*

expanded pit production and alternatives to current plans. He noted the historical precedents of previous pit expansion plans that were defeated with pressure related to previous PEIS activities.

Longstanding Tri-Valley CAREs members likely recall our group's role in fighting off the Modern Pit Facility and the Complex 2030 "Consolidated Plutonium Center" to name two of the former proposals. As Jay noted in his closing remarks, we must prepare for a similar struggle and with the lever of the law (i.e., NEPA) we can succeed again.

Also presenting on the panel were Andy Weber, former Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear, Chemical & Biological Defense and staff director of the Nuclear Weapons Council, and Professor Steve Fetter, former Assistant Director in the White House Office of Science & Technology Policy. On the basis of informed, insider analysis, both men challenged the "need" for large-scale pit production to address the requirements of the current stockpile. Each noted that the W78 could be retired as an alternative to creating this new, mash-up W87-1 warhead. Each offered a variation on the fundamental question, why not rely on the existing W87 rather than put a new design into the stockpile alongside it?

In the very good question and answer and discussion that followed the presentations, we heard a plea for more basic education and simple arguments making the case against pit production. We recognized the need for further education and we highlighted questions that Congress and NGOs should raise, including:

- Why is this level of production necessary given the approximately 20,000 existing pits stored at the Pantex facility that could be reused? What role could the proven technique of "pit reuse" play if we foreswore new designs?
- How will we afford this and hope to meet all of the technical challenges, when NNSA's preliminary estimate for expanded pit production tops \$40 billion? How should we consider that many complicated NNSA projects go over-budget by factors of 2 to 10 - and some, like MOX at SRS and ignition at NIF at LLNL, never work as intended?
- Why do we want to support this build-up of the nuclear arsenal and risk a return to nuclear explosive testing? What role could further arms control and disarmament play?

Tri-Valley CAREs' plans for follow up include a series of easy-to-read fact sheets and messages particularly aimed at new congressional staff on key committees. We will post our new fact sheets on our website and link as well to other materials crafted by colleague organizations.

In addition, as we receive more information about next year's budget request at NNSA and plans around its "plutonium strategy," we will urge questions from congressional offices at key opportunities. We will also continue to reach out to arms control and disarmament colleague organizations in Washington, DC to integrate understanding of pit production and related nuclear weapons policy issues into their work.

Pit production and related issues will be featured as part of the Alliance for Nuclear Accountability DC Days, May 19-22 which will include approximately 75 participants from nuclear weapons complex sites with approximately 100 congressional office and administration meetings. Tri-Valley CAREs will have a leadership role in shaping the education and strategy related to new nukes and pit production for DC Days. With the current federal budget process delay due to the Trump 'shutdown,' raising issues about pit production plans and costs in late May in DC will be particularly timely.

In sum, while Tri-Valley CAREs, Union of Concerned Scientists, and Nuclear Watch New Mexico made enormous strides in DC last month, your future participation in stopping expanded plutonium pit production is essential to the ultimate success of the project.

Stay tuned, check our website for new information, come to our monthly meetings for great discussion and action ideas, and join us for DC Days if your schedule allows (space is limited; timely RSVP is essential to marylia@earthlink.net or marylia@trivalleycares.org).

## ◆ Alerts 4 U ◆

**Wednesday, March 13**

### Tracy Community Meeting

**6:30 – 7:30 PM,**

**902 N. Central Ave. #201, Tracy**

**(925) 443-7148 for details**

Come join us for a presentation and discussion about the ongoing plan to increase bomb blasts at Livermore Lab's Site 300 near Tracy. (See *Insert*)

**Thursday, March 21**

### Tri-Valley CAREs meeting

**7:30 – 8:30 PM, TVC Office**

**4049 1st St. Suite 139A, Livermore**

**(925) 443-7148 for details**

Come join us for Tri-Valley CAREs' March monthly meeting. Our meetings are always a great chance to get issue updates, celebrate our progress and successes, meet new friends, and discuss upcoming events. We will meet in the First Floor Conference Room. Snacks and refreshments served.



**May 19-22**

### DC Days

**Washington, DC**

**<http://www.ananuclear.org/dcdays/>**

**for details**

Our illustrious team will join activists from around the country for four days in Washington, DC, during which there will be around 100 team meetings. In addition to key Senate and House offices, your team will also meet with important Committee members and staff, including Armed Services, Appropriations, and Energy Committees. Additionally they will meet with senior administration officials at DOE and other relevant agencies. Be sure to attend our June meeting to hear reports from our team on their important work in DC and how you can help with follow up.

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## Alert! Your Calls are Needed Now

The 116th Congress is underway with new vision and energy – including a freshly awakened interest in U.S. nuclear weapons policy. Two things are clear at the outset: First, this welcome congressional spark must be fanned by grassroots action in order to grow into full-fledged policy change. And, second, public involvement at this juncture can create real progress toward nuclear disarmament.

With this in mind, Tri-Valley CAREs has been working with like-minded colleagues and with legislators in the House and Senate to introduce key bills to move the country away from the dangerous escalation outlined in Trump's Nuclear Posture Review (see <http://www.trivalleycares.org/new/2018NPRAnalysis.pdf>)

We ask for your help today to enable three newly introduced congressional bills to acquire enough co-sponsors to move forward, pass and become law. It will be a hard slog, of course, but we do have a new opportunity in the 116th Congress.

Here are the details you need to make calls – and make a difference! Please note the capitol switchboard is (202) 224-3121.

1. Rep. Ted Lieu (D-CA-33) has introduced **H.R. 1086 - the Hold the LYNE (low-yield nuclear explosive) Act of 2019**. H.R. 1086 would prohibit the production and deployment of a "more usable," low-yield submarine-launched nuclear warhead (called the W76-2) that was given the



go-ahead in last year's Nuclear Posture Review. H.R. 1086 was introduced by Rep. Lieu and Rep. Adam Smith with 20 additional co-sponsors including 5 from California (Garamendi, Lee, Speier, Lowenthal and Cisneros).

According to President Trump, this low-yield option will make a U.S. nuclear strike more "credible," which means more likely to occur. This lowers the threshold for a conventional military conflict to become a nuclear war. Call your Representative and ask him/her to co-sponsor H.R. 1086. To check the full co-sponsor list, go to Congress.gov and type in the bill number. If your member of Congress is already on board, please call and say thank you.

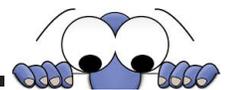
2. Rep. Ted Lieu (D-CA-33) and Senator Ed Markey (D-MA) have introduced the **Restricting First Use of Nuclear Weapons Act of 2019** in the House and Senate. This legislation would prohibit the President from launching a first-use of nuclear

weapons without an expressed declaration of war by the Congress.

This bill retains the same numbers as last year – **H.R. 669** in the House and **S. 200** in the Senate. This bill is gathering additional co-sponsors (and power) with 52 presently in the House including 17 from California (Panetta, Eshoo, Lee, Khanna, Speier, Garamendi, Lofgren Thompson, DeSaulnier, Waters, Lowenthal, Takano, Carbajal, Napolitano, Sherman, Chu, and Porter.) In the Senate, it has 13 co-

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