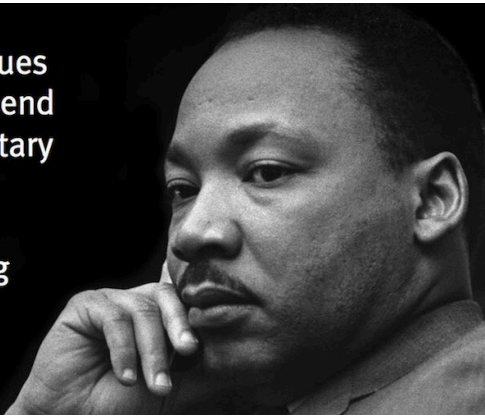


Dancing with Death: The Fiscal Year 2025 Nuclear Weapons Budget

A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death.



The President's Fiscal Year 2025 budget request stands at **\$895 billion for the Defense Department and the nuclear weapons** in the Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA).

Congress will debate the budget in committee and on the floor in the coming weeks, in fact "mark up" of the National Defense Authorization Act is currently scheduled to take place while Tri-Valley CAREs team is in Washington for DC Days. If the past is prologue, while many social programs will be on Congress's chopping block, a plethora of weapons systems including new nuclear warheads will be increased well over the President's already obscene request.

Tri-Valley CAREs is committed to ensuring this madness does not happen on the quiet, without public outcry and opposition. To help inform your activism, this alert summarizes key information from the President's request for the NNSA, with a focus on its nuclear weapons activities.

Between now and October 1, 2024 (which begins fiscal 2025) we will offer a series of action alerts and opportunities for your voice to be heard alongside other Tri-Valley CAREs members, colleagues, and allies from like-minded organizations.

The White House statement touts its FY25 request for "\$19.8 billion for Weapons Activities, \$4.5 billion above the 2021 enacted level." This is the lion's share of the total NNSA request, which stands at \$24.9 billion for FY25.

While the missiles and submarines over at the Pentagon cost more to build, it's the NNSA nuclear Weapons Activities budget line that funds the warheads and bombs that arm them, making them weapons of nuclear mass destruction.

Here are some of the important NNSA details for the coming fiscal year...

The President's FY25 budget request, once again, does not request any funding for a new nuclear version of the Sea-Launched Cruise Missile (W80-4 Alt-SLCM). Biden's nuclear posture review did not include it, and neither have any of his budget requests. Still, Congress has added money the last two budget cycles for this new warhead, which Livermore Lab is designing, and it is on the NNSA's "Unfunded Priorities List." **We are calling on Congress to fund the new SLCM warhead in FY25 at the President's request – zero dollars!**

Unfortunately, the President FY25 request funds six nuclear weapons systems overall, including:

- the W80-4 warhead that Livermore is designing for a new air-launched cruise missile, called the Long-Range Stand Off Weapon because pilots will be able to launch a precision-guided nuclear strike on an unsuspecting population from more than a thousand miles away;
- the W87-1 warhead, also being designed at Livermore Lab, which will be the first wholly new warhead developed since the end of full-scale nuclear testing in Nevada in 1992, and will require new plutonium pits (cores);
- the W93 warhead, which is in an early stage of development but is touted as a totally new design being done in cooperation with the United Kingdom to upgrade its nuclear fleet; and,
- the B61-13 nuclear bomb, slated to begin its initial design in FY25.

The numbers tell the story. The FY25 request for the W80-4 is \$1.2 billion, up 4% from 2023. The W87-1 request is \$1.1 billion for FY25, up 61% from 2023. The W93 request is \$456 million, up 90% from 2023. And, the B61-13 request in its first year is \$16 million. Typically, as you can see from the list, initial requests start low and go up, up, up as the design work progresses.

The NNSA FY25 request also contains a budget line for nuclear weapons dismantlement, which funds the work at the Pantex Plant to take apart nuclear weapons that have been retired previously and have been waiting in the dismantlement queue. This is a budget line that illuminates the relative priority being given to disarmament vs. armament. The request for the coming fiscal year stands at a paltry \$54 million. Further, Congress does not tend to plus up this budget line one penny.

It's up to us to make our voices – and our priorities – heard. While we hold the President accountable for his FY25 request, it is just that, a request. The Constitution gives Congress the power of the purse. Congress authorizes spending levels and appropriates funds for them. **Further, we do have congressional champions who are trying to change U.S. nuclear policy and cut the**

Nuclear Arms Race Dollars flow into Livermore Lab – Again...

The Biden Administration’s Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) for Livermore Laboratory has been released and it tops \$2.5 billion for the first time. **The Lab’s overall budget is up 5%.** Tri-Valley CAREs has long advocated for Livermore Lab to grow its civilian science mission and shrink its weapons focus. This year’s budget request shows that we have our work cut out for us by throwing money at the new nuclear arms race, while limiting funds for civilian sciences and cleanup projects.

And as you can see in the pie chart above, almost **85% of the Lab’s budget is for Nuclear Weapons Activities.** In the detail of the budget request it is revealed that the Lab is getting a 64% increase in funding for its work on the W87-1 Modification Program in FY25 to \$82.85m. This is the warhead that will sit atop the new Sentinel Intercontinental Ballistic Missile, which was recently found to be 37% over its cost estimates (not including the warhead costs) and deeply behind schedule. Also, the need for this new generation of ICBM’s has increasing come into question.

Additionally, Livermore Lab’s newly designed W87-1 will be the first first wholly new warhead developed since the end of full-scale nuclear testing in 1992, and will require new plutonium pits. In fact, it will be the recipient of at least 800 plutonium pits set to be delivered by the government’s enhanced Plutonium Pit Production plan. Tri-Valley CAREs, Savannah River Site Watch and Nuke Watch New Mexico are plaintiffs in litigation brought against the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) arguing that the agency failed to “programmatically” evaluate the environmental impacts of the enhanced pit production development plans. The law requires the Agency to analyze in an environmental impact statement the full impacts of its plutonium pit production plans across the nuclear weapons complex, including the impacts at Livermore Lab, which it has not done.

The FY25 budget request illuminates that Livermore Lab is set for a **50% increase in funding for “Enterprise Pit Production Support” to \$97.35m.** The work is happening already at Livermore, and the potential impact of this new activity was not directly analyzed in any NEPA document, including the recent Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement for Continued Operations at Livermore Lab. However, pit production support activities can be extrapolated to be the likely source of the 5x increase the administrative limits for plutonium mixtures at the Lab described in the SWEIS and the purported need for new facilities it mentions, like the proposed Advanced Hydrotest Facility at Site 300, which a weapons designer once referred to as “a nuclear weapons designer’s dream machine” for its capacity to help design new plutonium primaries (aka pits).”

Let’s compare the funds for Nuclear Weapons Activities to the Lab’s budget request for (non-weapons) Science, which is a mere 2% of the total. And, as you can see from the pie chart, research on Energy Efficiency and Renewables doesn’t even crack 1% of the request. Even Defense Nuclear Non-Proliferation is struggling at the 10.6% mark.

This is a budget request that supports and accelerates a new global nuclear arms race. While this may not surprise, the lack of consideration given to public safety and the environment, via cleanup and Decontaminating & Decommissioning (D&D) contaminated buildings, is shocking. Tri-Valley CAREs members have raised the alarm in Washington, DC and locally about these heavily contaminated, abandoned buildings at Livermore Lab and other sites in the nuclear weapons complex for a decade now. In a display of what a low priority it is to deal with these facilities, which are noted to put the public at risk, the FY25 budget has \$0 for D&D of “High Risk” buildings. We are told that it is because there is a “carryover” of previous funds. However, there is still much to do. For example, Building 280 demolition (only the reactor has been removed), Building 175 slab and soil removal, Building 251 demolition to slab, Legacy Slab and Building 212 demolition and dozens of other projects. The government is letting this worker and public risk persist while throwing money at the development of new nuclear weapons.

We have a long way to go in transforming Livermore into a “Green Lab” dedicated to a civilian science mission and the moral obligation to clean up the environment from decades of nuclear weapons programs. The FY25 budget request rapidly moves LLNL in the opposite direction. Yet, we will continue to challenge this momentum. Our work in in the coming months and years will seek to change what gets funded at Livermore Lab and, in doing so, achieve a safer, healthier future for our planet. **Join us!**

