# QUESTIONS FOR THE APRIL 10 U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY (DOE) FY 2014 NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND CLEANUP BUDGET ROLLOUT

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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for further information:

Marylia Kelley, Tri-Valley CAREs, Livermore, CA (925) 443-7148

Katherine Fuchs, ANA, Washington, DC (202) 544-0217

Bob Schaeffer, Public Policy Assoc. and ANA, (239) 395-6773

and local contacts listed below

An overriding issue for the Wednesday, April 10, budget release is: Will the Obama Administration continue to escalate funding for unnecessary nuclear programs in light of current fiscal constraints while cutting legally required cleanup spending? The Alliance for Nuclear Accountability (ANA), a national network of groups from communities downwind and downstream of U.S. nuclear facilities, is concerned that out-of-control spending on nuclear weapons will divert resources from legally required environmental cleanup, dismantlement, and critical nonproliferation efforts. Here are some key questions that the Department of Energy (DOE) budget should address:

-- How much will be spent on construction of the Mixed Oxide (MOX) plutonium fuel plant at the Savannah River Site, which is far behind schedule and over budget? What is DOE's re-baselined cost estimate for building the facility, recently reported by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to have increased from $4.9 billion in 2008 to $7.7 billion? What is the projected life-cycle cost for all aspects of the MOX program, which ANA estimates to be over $20 billion?

-- Will the budget rein in over-spending on the Uranium Processing Facility (UPF) in Oak Ridge? Will there be any accountability for the flawed $500 million building design fiasco before more money is spent? Will an Independent Cost Estimate be required before UPF construction funding is released?

-- How will funding for existing plutonium facilities for nuclear weapons production be managed? With the Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Replacement-Nuclear Facility (CMRR-NF) deferred, will the Administration request money to use existing plutonium facilities to meet current production needs for nuclear weapon pits or "triggers."

-- Will funding for Life Extension Program (LEP) activities, particularly the B 61-12 (LEP), be constrained or reprioritized? July 2012 cost estimates for the B61 leaped from $4 billion to $10 billion. In response to sequestration, leaders of DOE told Congress that it "could need to slow the B61-12" and other LEP programs.

-- Will the budget request adequately fund the nation's arms reduction commitment? Currently the U.S. lacks capacity to dismantle already retired warheads. The backlog is now more than 10 years, while demand is increasing under new START. Dismantlement funding was halved in the last two budgets, and modernization of dismantlement operations was deferred by decades.

-- Will there be a funding reduction for the National Ignition Facility (NIF) at Lawrence Livermore National Lab due to its failure to reach "ignition"? What is the Administration's contingency plan for NIF now that it has failed its third and "final" deadline to achieve ignition by the end of 2012? Will any scientific knowledge be salvaged from taxpayers' $7.5 billion investment in NIF?

-- Does the budget request include the legally mandated DOE report on unused appropriations from prior years? How much money is DOE carrying over, and how will these funds be used?

-- How much additional Environmental Management (EM) funding would be necessary in FY 2014 to meet all legally mandated cleanup milestones? Cleanup agreements at a dozen major sites are underfunded by hundreds of million dollars.

-- In which states does DOE face fines and lawsuits because of missing the milestones? Binding cleanup agreements with states have provisions for fines and further legal actions.

-- Is an independent, external review of the Hanford Waste Treatment Plant (WTP) included in the budget? DOE's Director of Engineering for the WTP recommended that work stop at the facility until such an investigation has taken place.

-- How much money is included for immediate construction of new tanks to replace leaking ones at the Hanford (WA) site? Historically, tanks at Hanford have leaked more than one million gallons into the soil near the Columbia River. New tanks are necessary to hold the waste from leaking tanks and as staging for the Waste Treatment Plant.

The DOE budget will be posted here on Wednesday, April 10

Nuclear weapons activists from around the country will be on Capitol Hill from Monday, April 15 through Friday, April 19 as part of ANA's 25th annual DC Days. They will hold more than five-dozen meetings with Members of Congress, their staffs, and Obama Administration officials.

For information about specific DOE nuclear weapons sites and programs, contact:

Tom Clements - Savannah River Site, MOX Plant, Reprocessing: (803) 240-7268 tomclements329@cs.com

Jay Coghlan - Los Alamos Lab & Life Extension Programs: (505) 989-7342 jay@nukewatch.org

Meredith Crafton - Hanford Waste Treatment Plant: (206) 722-4269 meredithc@hanfordchallenge.org

Don Hancock - Environmental Management Cleanup Program: (505) 262-1862 sricdon@earthlink.net

Ralph Hutchison - Oak Ridge Site and Dismantlement: (865) 776-5050 orep@earthlink.net

Marylia Kelley - Lawrence Livermore Lab & Life Extension Programs: (925) 443-7148 marylia@trivalleycares.

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**CONTACT:**

Marylia Kelley, 925-443-7148, marylia@trivalleycares.org

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