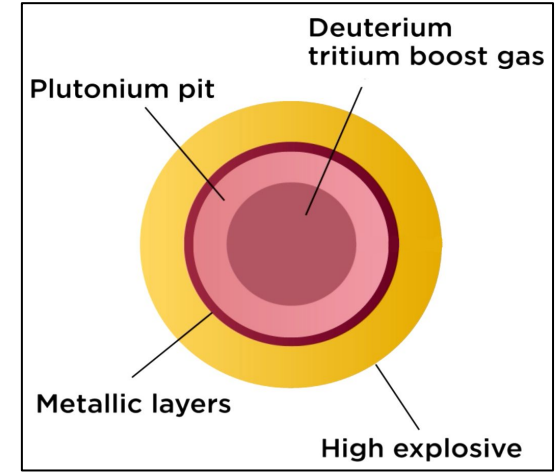


# Why Expanded Plutonium Pit Production is Wrong

- Pit production has been the choke point of industrial-scale U.S. nuclear weapons production ever since a 1989 FBI raid shut down operations at the Rocky Flats Plant near Denver.
- In 1996 production was transferred back to the Los Alamos Lab in northern New Mexico but capped at no more than 20 pits per year.
- In 2018 the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) declared it would produce at least 30 pits per year at the Los Alamos Lab and 50 per year at the Savannah River Site in South Carolina.
- According to the new draft Pit Production Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS), NNSA now plans to produce up to 205 pits per year for the new arms race.



# **No future production is to maintain the safety and reliability of the existing, tested stockpile.**

- New pits are for *new* nuclear weapons designs, the W87-1 ICBM and W93 sub-launched warheads.
- New designs can't be tested, thereby perhaps degrading stockpile confidence. Or new designs could prompt the U.S. to resume testing, after which other nuclear weapons states would surely follow.
- A 2006 JASON study showed most pit types have minimum lives of over 100 years and those that don't have clear fixes. No expiration date.
- Pits now average around 43 years old. More than 15,000 existing pits are already stored at NNSA's Pantex Plant near Amarillo, TX.

- **Pit production is NNSA's most expensive program ever** with \$5 billion to be spent over each of the next six years and at least \$60 billion over the next 20 years.
- The independent Government Accountability Office has repeatedly concluded that NNSA has no credible cost estimates.
- **The radioactive waste problem:** The New Mexico Environment Department is requiring DOE to prioritize Cold War wastes for disposal at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant *instead of new plutonium bomb wastes*.
- NMED is also requiring DOE to look for a new out-of-state dump.
- In short, there is no certain pathway for the safe disposal of future radioactive bomb wastes.

- **LANL's existing limited pit production capability should be sufficient** should stockpile problems arise in the future.
- Pit production at SRS should be vigorously opposed because it could be scaled up way beyond LANL for the new nuclear arms race.
- In addition, DOE is legally required to remove plutonium from South Carolina, not add plutonium because of pit production.
- **LANL's pit production facility is outdated and unsafe:** Known as "PF-4," it is 48 years old, not designed for mass production, and has a long history of nuclear safety infractions.
- Moreover, DOE is "deferring" comprehensive cleanup at the Lab until plutonium pit production is done (which in effect means never).

# **Pit Production Conflicts With the NonProliferation Treaty and the National Environmental Policy Act**

- In September 2024 a federal judge ruled that the NNSA had violated NEPA by not completing a new Pit Production Programmatic EIS.
- NNSA's recent draft Programmatic EIS explicitly claims that its “missions are conducted fully consistent with current treaty obligations.”
- Ironically, arms control treaties are dead other than the NPT and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (which the U.S. does not recognize).
- The recent NPT Review Conference failed for the third time over a span of 15 years, threatening the Treaty's continuing viability.
- Pit production for the next 50 years conflicts with the NPT's Article VI obligation to enter into serious negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament.

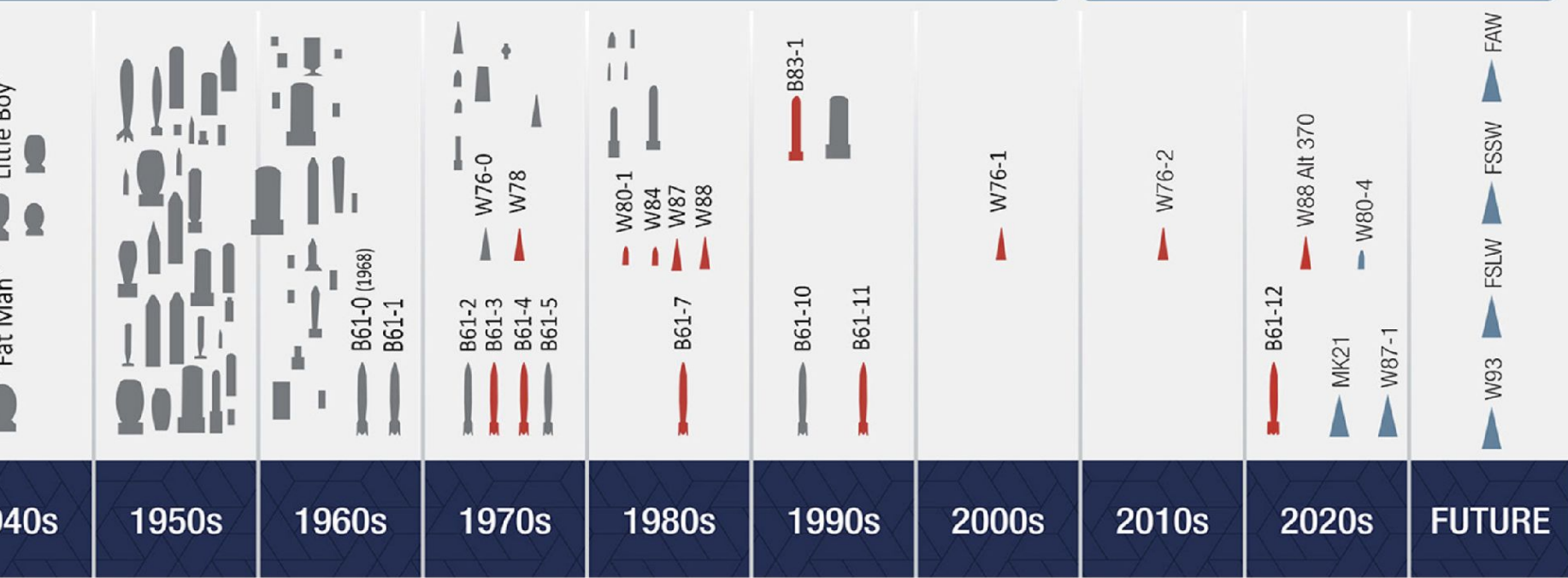
# Critical Studies Are Being Withheld

- Because the pit production program is so troubled, DOE ordered that a “special study of NNSA’s leadership and management” be completed by mid-December 2025. It is reportedly classified, which is questionable.
- The draft Pit Production PEIS omits any reference to the 2006 JASON pit life study. Instead, it claims that “uncertainty in the performance of older plutonium increases over time, resulting in decreasing confidence.”
- A 2012 Livermore Lab study found that plutonium is “aging gracefully.”
- A new JASON pit life study was reportedly completed before the end of 2025. NNSA has not released it.
- Recommended: Union of Concerned Scientists’ report *Plutonium Pit Production*, Dylan Spaulding, especially the chapter on lack of aging effects.

# U.S. STOCKPILE MILESTONES

- Future Stockpile
- Current in Stockpile
- Retired / Dismantled

B = Bomb  
 W = Warhead  
 FAW = Future Air-Delivered Warhead  
 FSSW = Future Strategic Sea-Based Warhead  
 FSLW = Future Strategic Land-Based Warhead



# Recommendations to Congress

- Question the classification of DOE's "special study" of NNSA's pit production program. Demand release of an unclassified version.
- Demand release of the unclassified executive summary of the new JASON pit life study (document number JSR-25-03ESU).
- Cut funding for NNSA's "Plutonium Modernization" program.
- Zero in on the troubled Savannah River Plutonium Processing Facility, now slated to be the most expensive building in U.S. history.

Contact info: Jay Coghlan, Nuclear Watch New Mexico,  
[jay@nukewatch.org](mailto:jay@nukewatch.org)

## ***Needed: Policy Review of Plutonium Pit Production***

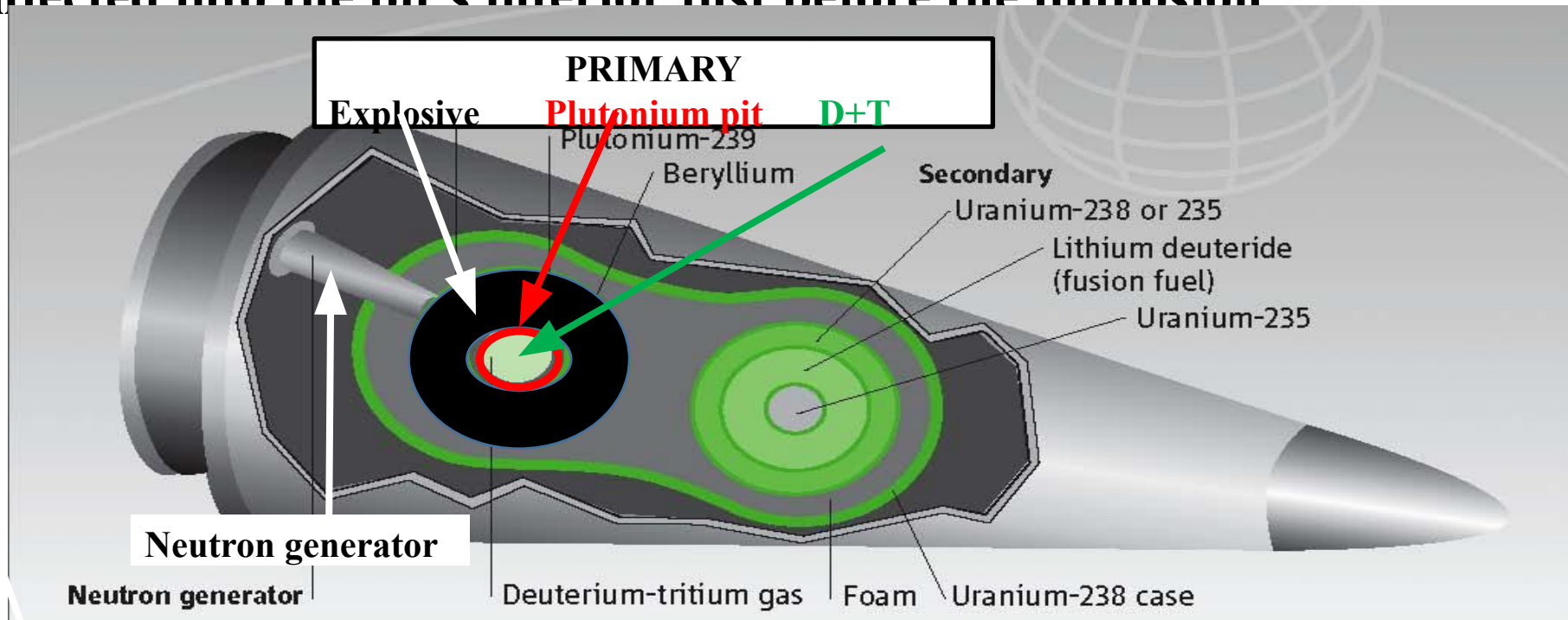
- 1. Out-of-control Savannah River facility construction costs**
- 2. Pit recycle option both ignored and invoked as back up**
- 3. Dangerous ICBM upload being prioritized**

Frank N. von Hippel, [fvhippel@princeton.edu](mailto:fvhippel@princeton.edu)

Program on Science and Global Security, Princeton University  
for Congressional Staff Briefing,

Russell Senate Office Building 188, 28 April 2023, 2:30-3:30 PM

**“Pit:” the hollow plutonium shell in a fission (“primary”).**  
**If imploded, it produces a small fission explosion, whose power is**  
**“boosted” by fusion reactions in the tritium-deuterium (D-T) gas**  
**injected into the pit’s interior just before the implosion**



(Based on image in the declassified House [Cox Committee] report,  
*PRC Theft of U.S. Thermonuclear Warhead Design Information*, 1999, p. 78.)

# **1. Out of Control Savannah River Site Plutonium-Pit-Production Facility Cost and Schedule**

**NNSA spent more than \$7.6 billion on building for a MOX facility cancelled in 2018 because of spiraling cost overruns.<sup>1</sup>**

**In 2023, GAO found “NNSA Does Not Have a Comprehensive Schedule or Cost Estimate for Pit Production Capability”<sup>2</sup>**

**Between FY24 and FY27, NNSA’s estimate of the cost of converting the building more than doubled from \$11 B to \$25 B with no estimate of a completion date.<sup>3</sup>**

**After spending \$6 billion (\$14 billion if you include expenditures when the building was to be a MOX fuel production facility) NNSA has just announced that it is rebidding the construction contract<sup>4</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>[https://www.postandcourier.com/business/contractors-for-nuclear-fuel-plant-at-savannah-river-site-accused-of-misusing-federal-funds/article\\_02a5a058-393a-11ea-8f41-6b6e8f762137.html](https://www.postandcourier.com/business/contractors-for-nuclear-fuel-plant-at-savannah-river-site-accused-of-misusing-federal-funds/article_02a5a058-393a-11ea-8f41-6b6e8f762137.html);

<sup>2</sup><https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-23-104661.pdf>;

<sup>3</sup> DOE Budget Justification FY27, Vol. 1, 145;

<sup>4</sup>

<https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/hearings/to-receive-testimony-on-the-department-of-energy-and-national-nuclear-security-administration-atomic-energy-defense-activities-in-review-of-the-defense-authorization-request-for-fiscal-year-2027-and-the-future-years-nuclear-security-program>.

## **2. Pit recycle option both ignored and treated as a last resort**

**Pit longevity *at least* 100 years (until *at least* 2080 ) according to 2006 JASON review for NNSA.<sup>1</sup>**

**NNSA is withholding the unclassified summary of the 2025 update.**

**In 2024, because of the delay in completion of the SRS pit-production facility, NNSA announced half the pits for the W-93, would be recycled from retired warheads.<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> <https://irp.fas.org/agency/dod/jason/pit.pdf>

<sup>1</sup> Former NNSA Administrator Jill Hruby testimony to to Senate Armed Services Committee, 17 April 2024, <https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/41724fulltranscript.pdf>, pp. 57-58.

### 3. Uploading the ICBMs Would Increase the Danger of Accidental Nuclear War

**W87-1 ICBM warhead first in line for pit production at Los Alamos to replace W78 warhead *but there already are enough W-87s.***

**400 ICBMs in 450 silos. *US already has 540 W87-0 warheads – enough for one per deployed ICBM.***<sup>1</sup>

ICBMs were downloaded to 1 warhead each at end of Cold War so that at most one US ICBM warhead could be destroyed by an attacking warhead.

But 2023 Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States recommended “the Air Force and Navy exercise uploading ICBM and SLBM warheads.”<sup>2</sup> Then Commander in Chief of Strategic Command, General Cotton, endorsed idea: **“I do believe that we need to take serious consideration in seeing what uploading and re-MIRVing the ICBM looks like and what does it take to potentially do that.”**<sup>3</sup>

Uploading the ICBMs would increase Strategic Command’s pressure on the President to decide to “use it or lose it” ***within 10 minutes.***<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hans M. Kristensen, Matt Korda, Eliana Johns & Mackenzie Knight-Boyle, “United States nuclear weapons, 2026,” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 82:2, 119-150,

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ida.org/-/media/feature/publications/a/am/americas-strategic-posture/strategic-posture-commission-report.ashx>, p. 48.<sup>4</sup>

# Recommendations

Congress should:

- 1. Suspend NNSA's pit production project at the Savannah River Site and require NNSA to focus on demonstrating reliable pit production at Los Alamos.**
- 2. Demand the release of the unclassified summary of the 2025 JASON pit aging report.**
- 3. Limit US ICBMs to one warhead each.**



# Worker-years per pit<sup>1</sup>

- Los Alamos (30 ->80 pits/yr) **85->48 worker-yrs/pit**
- Savannah River Site (50 ->125 pits/yr) **34->23 worker-yrs/pit**

<sup>1</sup>PEIS Vol. I: 2-14, 2-22; <sup>2</sup> PEIS 2-1. <sup>3</sup>

# Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement & Public Engagement

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Tanvi Kardile  
Nuclear Policy Program Director  
Tri-Valley CAREs  
[tanvi@trivalleycares.org](mailto:tanvi@trivalleycares.org)

Board President  
Alliance for Nuclear Accountability

# *Value of ANA & Coalition Building*

- Represents most of the plaintiff organizations of this lawsuit
- ANA frontline organizations located in communities with public hearings have been doing advocacy about public hearings, written comment period
  - Lack of community notices from NNSA
- Annual DC Days advocacy



# *Fails to Analyze Other Sites*

- Pit production affects ALL sites
- Draft PEIS fails to mention effects and plutonium pit work done at sites outside of Los Alamos and Savannah River
  - Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Nevada National Security Site, Kansas City National Security Campus



# Other Sites

- Primary driver for “Enhanced Plutonium Utilization”
  - Work is connected to plutonium pit production plans at both Los Alamos Lab and the Savannah River Site. It is also connected to the component production at Kansas City Plant in Missouri, the assembly work at Pantex Plant, and the sub-critical testing of the new warheads at Nevada National Security Site.
  - Lab failed security drill-> forced to downsize its plutonium usage, storage, transportation by 2012
  - Raise amount of plutonium throughput at the lab by increasing its current status as “Security III” facility (able to use small quantities of plutonium at work stations) to “Security II” facility, able to use larger quantities
- FY 27 budget
  - LLNL’s “Enterprise Plutonium Pit Production Support” work will more than double in FY2027 to \$166,696,000

**27% increase** in the collective worker dose from radiological emissions at LLNL



# Transportation

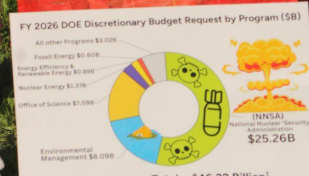
- Nuclear materials and waste shipped among all of the sites on highways
- Transportation route is not yet known
- Transportation only analyzed in the context of SRS and LANL

Alternative	Total Number of Shipments/(Total Miles Driven) per year			
	Radioactive Materials			Nonrad
	LLW/MLLW <sup>a</sup> (to NNSS)	TRU <sup>a</sup> (to WIPP)	Secure Shipments (pits, pit materials, HEU) to/from LANL, SRS, Pantex, NNSS, and Y-12 <sup>b</sup>	Hazardous <sup>a</sup> (to offsite TSD locations)
No-Action All LANL <b>30–80 ppy</b>	320–853/ (240,000– 640,000)	82–219/ (27,880–74,340)	90–173/ (110,950–242,950)	≤42/ (≤10,500)
Multi-Site LANL+SRS <b>80–205 ppy</b>	567–1,467/ (783,400– 1,990,800)	217–444/ (216,880– 389,340)	145–270/ (377,450–837,020)	≤67/ (≤11,750)
Single-Site SRS <b>60–135 ppy</b> (range includes an assumed continued 10 ppy ongoing nominal production contribution from LANL)	349–716/ (619,900– 1,427,300)	158–248/ (196,820– 322,820)	112–154/ (324,620–652,270)	≤35/ (≤3,750)

- **180% increase** in the number of plutonium shipments into and out of Livermore Lab
- **21% increase** in latent cancer fatalities in the populations along the transportation routes
- **6.6% increase** in the dose to transportation crews

# Public Hearings

- 5 locations; production sites were also virtual
  - N. Augusta, SC; Livermore, CA; Santa Fe, NM; Kansas City, MO; Washington, DC
- Vast majority of the comments were in opposition to plutonium pit production
- Around 400 people present



# Written Comments

- Public comment period for written comments is open!
  - Deadline: July 16, 2026
  - Email: [PitPEIS@nnsa.doe.gov](mailto:PitPEIS@nnsa.doe.gov)
  - Include the document number: DOE/EIS-0573
- Final PEIS should address
  - Effects at ALL sites
  - Transportation route
  - Proliferation analysis
- Members of Congress can submit comments!
- Resource: [pitpeis.com](http://pitpeis.com)

**Why SUBMIT  
a PUBLIC COMMENT**

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- 

**They become part of the public record**
- 

**To raise public awareness**
- 

**To hold decision makers accountable**
- 

**They can be used for future litigation**

# The draft PEIS was released by NNSA April 10, 2026

*Attend a training to learn how to submit your comment!*

## PEIS Comment Training Schedule:

Date	Time	Registration Link
Wednesday, June 3, 2026	3:00-4:00 p.m. PT / 6:00-7:00 p.m. ET	<a href="https://secure.ucs.org/a/2026-6-3-peis-training">https://secure.ucs.org/a/2026-6-3-peis-training</a>
Wednesday, June 10, 2026	6:00-7:00 p.m. PT 9:00-10:00 p.m. ET	<a href="https://secure.ucs.org/a/2026-6-10-peis-training">https://secure.ucs.org/a/2026-6-10-peis-training</a>
Wednesday, June 17, 2026	5:00-6:00 p.m. PT / 8:00-9:00 p.m. ET	<a href="https://secure.ucs.org/a/2026-6-17-peis-training">https://secure.ucs.org/a/2026-6-17-peis-training</a>
Wednesday, June 24, 2026	3:00-4:00 p.m. PT / 6:00-7:00 p.m. ET	<a href="https://secure.ucs.org/a/2026-6-24-peis-training">https://secure.ucs.org/a/2026-6-24-peis-training</a>
Wednesday, July 1, 2026	6:00-7:00 p.m. PT / 9:00-10:00 p.m. ET	<a href="https://secure.ucs.org/a/2026-7-1-peis-training">https://secure.ucs.org/a/2026-7-1-peis-training</a>