



JOHN GARAMENDI
UNITED STATES CONGRESS

16 July 2026

Ms. Jade Fortiner
NEPA Document Manager
National Nuclear Security Administration
Office of Pit Production Modernization

To whom it may concern,

My name is John Garamendi, Congressman for California's 8th Congressional District. I am writing in response to the Draft Pit Production Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (DOE/EIS-0573).

As a member of the House Armed Services Committee, I have been deeply disturbed by the inadequate planning, oversight, and accountability associated with the plutonium pit production program. Although billions of tax dollars have already been spent, I remain deeply concerned that the program still does not appear to have an executable plan that fully considers the risks to communities, the environment, and American national security. This Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement does not alleviate my concerns.

First and foremost, I believe fundamental issues that have plagued these projects remain unaddressed. For example, past GAO reports have identified significant failures ranging from the lack of a comprehensive schedule to excessive cost growth. Additionally, I believe there has been inadequate public explanation for why this approach was chosen over alternative options. Rather than resolving these issues, this report and recent efforts have only deepened my fear that we have yet to develop a responsible, workable plan.

Beyond the risks associated with this proposal, I remain deeply concerned that the current plans for plutonium pit production are inherently flawed because the broader requirements are inadequately grounded. How can we adequately evaluate the risks to local communities, the environment, and public trust without a clear understanding of the scope and scale of the requirements driving these projects?

Without addressing these issues, I fear that the NNSA will be unable to properly assess the full environmental impacts of pit production. I also believe that moving forward with this program without first adequately evaluating its foundations, would be to risk repeating the mistakes of the past.

During the Cold War, the U.S. attempted to rapidly increase its nuclear weapons stockpile, engaging in a dangerous arms race. The failure to adequately assess plans for the construction of America's nuclear weapons arsenal led to irreparable damage to the environment that Americans still grapple with today.

For example, the previous site of large-scale plutonium pit production, Rocky Flats Plant, was raided by the FBI as part of an environmental crimes investigation after an investigation alleged serious environmental contamination. Even after extensive cleanup, concerns remain about the risks of contamination more than three decades later.

Today, I worry we risk repeating these same mistakes as we rush to produce plutonium pits at the Savannah River Site. Rather than pouring money into a poorly conceived program with uncertain foundations, I am of the opinion the United States would be better served by significantly curtailing pit production plans, pausing the Savannah River Site, and developing a more sustainable approach to maintaining the U.S. nuclear stockpile. I hold the view that in rushing to production, the NNSA has developed a program that poses undue risks to communities and the environment. I also worry that fundamental considerations, such as the cost and schedule, remain inadequately evaluated.

Neither production for the sake of production nor continued arms racing will not make the United States safer or more secure. Poorly planned projects and rushed nuclear weapons development can, however, pose significant risks to local communities and our national security. The NNSA must do more to demonstrate that the proposed production requirement is necessary, that reasonable alternatives have been thoughtfully considered, and that the program can be responsibly executed without imposing unjustified risks on communities, the environment, taxpayers, or national security.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "John Garamendi". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" and last name "Garamendi" clearly distinguishable.

JOHN GARAMENDI
Member of Congress