

June 29, 2021

Dear Members of the House Appropriations Committee,

The United States does not need a new nuclear sea launched cruise missile (SLCM-N).

Spending \$15 million on this system now, before the Biden administration has even started its Nuclear Posture Review and when the Navy may cancel the program next year is wasteful, destabilizing, and just another example of a broken defense acquisition process.

These weapons are relics of a Cold War nuclear warfighting plan to use nuclear weapons not as a strategic deterrent, but to augment conventional forces in battlefield roles. This concept did not make sense then and makes even less sense now. In fact, it flies in the face of the joint statement issued by Presidents Biden and Putin this summer, when they echoed the words of Presidents Reagan and Gorbachev that “a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.”

Three decades have passed since the United States last deployed nuclear cruise missiles at sea. President George H.W. Bush directed the nuclear Tomahawk Land Attack Missile to be taken off patrol in 1991 at the end of the Cold War.

Prior to the Trump administration, two Democratic and two Republican administrations had agreed that we no longer needed to deploy nuclear armed cruise missiles on conventional Navy ships, deeming them redundant, destabilizing, and detracting from higher priority conventional missions. President Biden himself called this weapon in 2019 a “[bad idea](#)” and he [replied to a 2020 Council for a Livable World questionnaire](#) saying that the United States did not need new nuclear weapons. The [2020 Democratic Platform](#) said that “the Trump Administration’s proposal to build new nuclear weapons is unnecessary, wasteful, and indefensible.”

Yet, there is currently \$15.2 million requested in the fiscal year 2022 budget to begin development of this Trump-era weapon, including \$5.2 million in Navy funding for the missile itself and \$10 million in National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) funding for the W80-4 warhead alteration for the SLCM-N. This money is a waste of U.S. taxpayer dollars.

This summer, Acting Navy Secretary Thomas Harker [directed the service](#) to plan to defund the system in fiscal year 2023 and there have been other [reports](#) that the Navy is not happy with the proposal, privately telling lawmakers that “the introduction of nuclear cruise missiles to the fleet would present both budgetary and logistical headaches for the service.” Such burdens could include returning nuclear weapons to states and bases that haven’t housed them in 30 years, retraining and certification of attack submarine or destroyer crews to maintain and secure nuclear weapons, or adding unnecessary time to deployments to have ships travel to nuclear storage facilities to be armed with non-mission critical munitions. This could also cause significant problems for our allies in the Pacific, who will not allow vessels armed with nuclear weapons to visit their ports or train with their units.

Furthermore, when it comes to deterring China, Pentagon officials have repeatedly [made clear](#) their view that the greatest threat posed in the Indo-Pacific region is the erosion of conventional—not strategic—deterrence. Adding a nuclear cruise missile to platforms that regularly deploy conventional cruise missiles will not boost conventional power, since the nuclear cruise missiles would replace conventional ones, but it would increase the chance of a conflict escalating into a nuclear one as both conventional and nuclear cruise missiles share an essentially indistinguishable radar signature.

Again, we believe that spending anything on this system, before the Biden administration has even started its Nuclear Posture Review and when the Navy may well cancel the program next year, is wasteful, dangerous and contrary to our national interest.

Cutting this program's funding now would be good for the nation, our national security and prevent a major waste of taxpayer dollars.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Survival  
Arms Control Association  
Atlanta Grandmothers for Peace  
Basel Peace Office  
Berkeley Fellowship of Unitarian Universalists Social Justice Committee  
Beyond Nuclear  
Beyond the Bomb  
Campaign for Peace, Disarmament & Common Security  
Carlsbad Mennonite Church  
Center on Conscience and War  
Citizens' Environmental Coalition  
Citizens' Resistance at Fermi Two (CRAFT)  
CODEPINK  
Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety  
Council for a Livable World  
Democratic Socialists of America San Francisco, CA Chapter - Ecosocialist Committee  
Don't Waste Arizona  
Earth Care  
Ecological Options Network  
Environmental Justice Coalition for Water (EJCW)  
Environmentalists Against War  
Friends Committee on National Legislation  
Foreign Policy for America  
Global Security Institute  
Global Zero  
Green State Solutions  
Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice  
Haydenville Congregational Church - Peace and Justice Committee

Indian Point Safe Energy Coalition  
Mid-Missouri Peaceworks  
Multicultural Alliance for a Safe Environment  
Nevada Nuclear Waste Task Force  
New Energy Economy  
New England Coalition on Nuclear Pollution  
Nuclear Age Peace Foundation  
Nuclear Watch New Mexico  
Nuclear Watch South  
Nukewatch  
Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance (OREPA)  
On Behalf Of Planet Earth  
Parents Against the Santa Susana Field Lab  
Partnership for Earth Spirituality  
Peace Action  
Peace Action Maine  
Peace Action of Wisconsin  
Physicians for Social Responsibility  
Physicians for Social Responsibility - Los Angeles  
Ploughshares Fund  
Portsmouth/Pikeston Residents for Environmental Safety and Security (PRESS)  
Progressive Democrats of America  
Psychologists for Social Responsibility  
RootsAction.org  
San Francisco Bay Physicians for Social Responsibility  
SEED Coalition  
Snake River Alliance  
Success Capital Organisation  
Sunflower Alliance  
Toledo Coalition for Safe Energy  
Tri-Valley CAREs (Communities Against a Radioactive Environment)  
Union of Concerned Scientists  
Vermont Yankee Decommissioning Alliance  
Veterans For Peace - Baltimore, MD Phil Berrigan Memorial Chapter  
Washington Against Nuclear Weapons Coalition  
Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility  
West Berkeley Alliance for Clean Air and Safe Jobs  
Whatcom Peace & Justice Center  
Win Without War  
Women's Action For New Directions (WAND)  
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom - Milwaukee  
World BEYOND War  
YUCCA (Youth United for Climate Crisis Action)