

Appropriations Committee Testimony

Rep. Joe Wilson (SC-02)

Chairwoman Nita Lowey and Ranking Member Kay Granger:

Thank you for your leadership on the committee. Best wishes Chairwoman Lowey on your retirement. Roxanne and I cherish our friendship with you and Steve which we established during our January delegation visit to Poland and Israel. It was an honor to be with you in Jerusalem where Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu praised you as a superstar.

I am here today representing the Second District of South Carolina, the home of the Savannah River Site. The Savannah River Site was constructed during the early 1950s to support our national defense programs during the Cold War. The site maintains that responsibility 70 years later through its national lab, NNSA missions, and environmental clean-up.

I support the President's Budget Request for the following missions:

1. Savannah River Plutonium Processing Facility – this facility will support a two-site solution, fulfilling the Nuclear Posture Review's requirement to produce 80 pits per year by 2030.
2. Tritium sustainment – this line item supports the Savannah River Tritium Enterprise, which prepares the nation's only tritium supply for our national defense and supports funding for the Tritium Finishing Facility at the site.
3. Surplus Plutonium Disposition – this project applies the dilute and dispose strategy to remove excess weapons grade plutonium from the Savannah River Site for safe long-term storage

4. Savannah River Liquid Tank Waste Stabilization and Disposition – with the expectation of the Salt Waste Processing Facility to start hot operations this year, these funds will support processing nearly 35 million gallons of radioactive waste into non-hazardous saltstone.
5. Advanced Manufacturing Collaborative - The AMC will be an innovation hub that will not only allow experts in emerging technologies to collaborate with industry, academia, and government to improve manufacturing, but also assist the DoE complex by accelerating technology development for the cleanup mission.

I ask the committee consider increases of:

1. \$45 million to Savannah River Risk Management Operations account – the site is home to H-Canyon, the only hardened nuclear chemical separations plant still in operation in the United States. Unfortunately, H-Canyon has been underfunded both this year and in previous years. With hundreds of metric tons of Low Enriched Uranium yet to be processed through the H-Canyon, it is critical to accelerate the operations of this vital asset.
2. \$6.5 million to Savannah River Community and Regulatory Support - This request reinstates Payment in Lieu of Taxes, which the communities have received in years past. With the site spanning over 300 square miles, it is important that the community is adequately served by the federal government to support local schools and emergency services. This is crucial as nearly half of the geographic area of Barnwell County is owned by the Site which obviously impacts county services.

An additional issue of critical importance to my community is the New Savannah Bluff Lock and Dam. The Lock and Dam currently provides a body of water upstream or "pool" which is used

for municipal and industrial uses, affecting thousands of jobs, as well as for recreation and waterfront development by many constituents in North Augusta, South Carolina. The US Army Corps of Engineers must not take any action to the New Savannah Bluff Lock and Dam that would result in a reduction of the “pool” below the physical level of 114.5 feet, the level, as required, at the date of enactment of the 2016 Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act. The currently proposed alternative, which would remove the lock and dam and construct a fixed weir with dry floodplain bench, does not meet the requirements of the legislation or the intent of congress to maintain the 114.5 foot pool. Any plan that is not in accordance with the WIIN Act wastes taxpayer resources that are better spent on a viable alternative consistent with the will of Congress to maintain the pool at 114.5 feet.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these requests.