

Energy and Water Subcommittee Testimony

Rep. Joe Wilson (SC-02)

Chairwoman Marcy Kaptur and Ranking Member Mike Simpson:

Thank you for your leadership on the subcommittee. 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 almost 70 years later.

According to the Nuclear Posture Review, it is critical that the United States produces 80 pits per year by 2030 to ensure defense readiness. Since the cancellation of the Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrication facility (MOX) last October, the NNSA has recommended repurposing the MOX facility for pit production to satisfy the 80 pits per year goal. With the facility already being 70 percent complete, the site is the most viable option for a two-site solution and I request the committee support full funding of critical weapons activities.

With the closure of MOX, South Carolina was left with the storage of weapons grade plutonium that was originally going to be processed through the MOX facility for commercial fuel use. I support the request of the President for \$79 million for the Surplus Plutonium Disposition project to support the dilute and dispose strategy to remove the plutonium from the site. Additionally, I support the President's budget request for Yucca Mountain to ensure the country has a safe and permanent repository for management of nuclear waste.

The site is also 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 approximately 240 metric tons of LEU yet to be processed through the H-Canyon, I am requesting an additional \$50 million to the President's budget request to accelerate the operations of this vital asset. I also support the President's budget request for the full funding of the Radioactive Liquid Tank Waste Stabilization and Disposition account and urge the committee to do the same.

With the site spanning over 300 square miles, it is important that the community is adequately served by the federal government. In the President's budget the payment in lieu of taxes was removed from receiving funding under community and regulatory support and I ask that the committee reinstate the \$6.5 million to ensure the local schools and emergency services are adequately served.

While it may be interpreted that the site is getting a significant increase in funding, a large portion is due to an increase in pension payments. It is projected that pensions will require an additional \$28.6 million from FY19 and up to an approximate \$98 million increase over the next 5 years, with the pensions only being funded at or around 80 percent. Lack of appropriate funding for pension payments will result in discontinuity in operations and potential layoffs due to funding being sourced from the Risk Management Operations account.

A final community-related area of importance is the Advanced Manufacturing Collaborative (AMC) facility. 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 am grateful that the President requested funding for the design and construction of this facility and I encourage the committee to support this private-public partnership, specifically for location at the USC Aiken campus.

Additionally, I strongly support the President's full funding request of over \$138 million for the completion of the Charleston Harbor Deepening Project. In 2017, the South Carolina Ports Authority signed a Project Partnership Agreement with the Army Corps of Engineers, which allows for the use of advanced funds from the SC Ports Authority for the federal share in addition to the non-federal share of the construction costs. Responsible, collaborative infrastructure investments like the Port of Charleston are in the best interest of American taxpayers and our growing economy. The Port of Charleston contributes \$53 billion in annual economic impact to the state of South Carolina and is a key economic driver for the region. In direct testament to the competitiveness of this project, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recently found the recalculated Benefit-Cost Ratio of the project to be over 6:1. I urge you to provide the full funding in the Army Corps of Engineers Civil Works construction funding for the Charleston Harbor Deepening Project and I am grateful to speak with you in support of this positive infrastructure investment.

Thank you for your time.