

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 1, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jim Inhofe  
Chairman  
Committee on Armed Services  
United States Senate  
228 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Armed Services  
United States Senate  
228 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Chairman Inhofe, and Ranking Member Reed:

As the Senate considers the Fiscal Year 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), we write to express our opposition to the inclusion of controversial and far reaching provisions that would fundamentally alter the Department of Energy's (DOE) responsibilities for the nuclear weapons budget.

As members of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, we write in support of Secretary Brouillette's June 29, 2020 letter to Chairman Inhofe and share his concerns that provisions in the Senate NDAA bill undermine DOE's ability to meet its mission goals and responsibility for maintaining the viability of the nation's nuclear deterrent.

As currently written, the Senate NDAA bill would strip the Secretary of Energy of the ability to manage some of the most sensitive national security programs that account for almost half of the Department's budget. Such changes could impede accountability and Congressional oversight, as well as imperil future funding for other critical DOE responsibilities such as promoting scientific and technological innovation, managing our National Laboratories, sponsoring basic research in the physical sciences, and ensuring cleanup of the nation's nuclear weapons complex.

Sweeping changes impacting civilian control of our nation's nuclear weapons programs should only be made in consultation and coordination with the committee of jurisdiction in an open and transparent manner. The changes included in the Senate NDAA bill have been met with opposition from the Trump Administration, former Secretaries of Energy, recent NNSA

Administrators, and the Congressional Advisory Panel on the Governance of the Nuclear Security Enterprise.

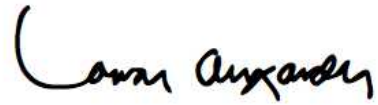
We therefore request that the provisions be removed from the pending bill or that the Senate be allowed to vote on the relevant amendments filed by Ranking Member Manchin.

Sincerely,



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Maria Cantwell



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Lamar Alexander



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Martin Heinrich



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Bill Cassidy



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Ron Wyden



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John Barrasso

/s/

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Mazie K. Hirono



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James Risch

/s/

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Bernie Sanders