

## **SANE Act Reintroduced; Would Save Taxpayers Tens of Billions**

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Today, Senator Ed Markey (D-MA) reintroduced the Smarter Approach to Nuclear Expenditures (SANE) Act, as did Representative Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) in the House. Staff from Senator Markey's office predicts that if enacted, this bill will save the U.S. over \$100 billion over the next 10 years through targeted reductions of nuclear weapons and infrastructure.

The bill incorporates many recommendations that the Project On Government Oversight has been advocating over the last few years, including reducing the scope of the B61 Life Extension Program (LEP). The B61 LEP was initially expected to cost approximately \$4 billion, but delays and budget cuts have caused the costs to jump to more than \$10 billion and earned the program a spot in the Government Accountability Office's High Risk Series.

Furthermore, the SANE Act would defund the Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrication Facility Project (MOX) and the Uranium Processing Facility (UPF) at Y-12 National Security Complex. Both MOX and UPF have caught POGO's attention in recent years as wasteful and largely unnecessary money pits.

MOX was originally proposed as a way of disposing of weapons-grade plutonium, but the cost of building the facility has jumped from \$1.6 billion to \$10 billion. In the Department of Energy's budget request earlier this year, the project was placed on "cold standby" in order to explore alternatives, but the recent omnibus spending bill allocated over \$300 million to continue construction on the facility with an explicit prohibition against using the funds to put the building on cold standby. The Department of Energy has identified several alternative options for plutonium disposition, which should be carefully considered instead of continuing to fund this nuclear bridge to nowhere. MOX has no customers and will only continue to needlessly cost taxpayers billions of dollars.

In addition, serious questions have been raised about the need for UPF, particularly since delays have pushed the completion date at least 10 years into the future and because current projections place it between \$5.5 billion and \$18 billion *over* the original estimate. These cost overruns, as well as delays and a \$500 million design mistake, prompted the Energy Department to bring in a "Red Team" of experts to evaluate the project. The Red Team recommended utilizing existing facilities at Y-12 as an alternative option to the "big box" UPF, as POGO had recommended in 2013. Moreover, POGO has found that there are buildings at other facilities in the nuclear complex, such as the Pantex site in Texas, that also have the capability of performing some of the uranium missions planned for the UPF. Because alternatives exist for parts if not all of UPF's mission, the National Nuclear Security Administration must thoroughly explore these options before we waste more money trying to make UPF happen.

Speaking about the previous SANE Act, POGO's Danielle Brian said, "POGO is enthusiastic that so many of our recommendations were included in the bill. We also hope there will be bipartisan support for aspects of the proposal, since the cuts aren't partisan and are a good start to spending smarter and ending the old Cold War strategy." This bill is full of common-sense reforms that would reduce antiquated spending priorities as well as increase the effectiveness of our armed forces. We are hopeful that this bill will attract bipartisan support— increased security and smarter spending should be top priorities regardless of party affiliation.

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