

Commenting on Plutonium Pits

Tell the NNSA: We Don't Need New Cores for Nuclear Weapons

On April 17, 2026, the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) published its draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) on the production of plutonium pits—the explosive cores of nuclear weapons—in the *Federal Register*, kicking off a 90-day public comment period that will last until July 16. This comment period is an opportunity for the public to weigh in on the PEIS and where it falls short.

A report published by the [Union of Concerned Scientists](#) found that plans for nuclear modernization, associated pit production, and new nuclear warheads are technologically unnecessary and politically destabilizing—and will actually decrease US security. Additionally, a rushed program will likely increase the risks to workers and frontline communities who bear still-unaddressed burdens from the production of nuclear weapons during the Cold War.

Submit a comment today urging the NNSA to consider all the public and environmental risks that come with plutonium pit production.

It is important that the NNSA and decisionmakers hear from experts and community members on the dangers and harms of expanding nuclear weapons production at the national labs, and its effects on surrounding communities. Your voice is crucial in opposing the production of new plutonium pits for new nuclear weapons.

How to Submit Written Comments

The deadline to submit all comments is July 16, 2026.

- Comments on the scope of the PEIS can be emailed to PitPEIS@nnsa.doe.gov. Include the docket number DOE/EIS-0573 in the subject line.
- Handwritten comments on the PEIS should be sent to:
Ms. Jade Fortiner
NEPA Document Manager
National Nuclear Security Administration
Office of Pit Production Modernization
US Department of Energy
1000 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20585

Before including any personally identifiable information in your comment, be aware that your entire comment—including personally identifiable information—can be made publicly available. We recommend doing so because it increases transparency in the decisionmaking and accountability processes.

If, however, you wish for the NNSA to withhold your personally identifiable information, please state that you wish to remain anonymous at the beginning of your comment.

Tips for Preparing Your Comment

- Include the docket number: DOE/EIS-0573
- Keep your comment focused on the subject matter of the environmental impacts of plutonium pit production. Topics outside of this will not be considered by the NNSA.
- Comments are most effective when they are unique and personalized. Use the suggested talking points (below) to guide your comment and add any personal experiences or expertise that will make your comment your own.
- If you are a scientist, technical expert, or member of a community near an involved site, indicate this in your comment.
- When appropriate, provide data/evidence to support your comment.
- Clearly state that you support transparency and a rigorous analysis of the risks associated with plutonium pit production across the many involved sites.

Questions to Consider

- How do you want to introduce yourself? Are you a concerned citizen or community member, a technical expert, you live near a transportation route?
- What concerns listed in the talking points below jump out at you and why?
- Is there information missing from the draft PEIS? For example, a plan for long-term nuclear waste disposal or training for first responders along transportation routes near you?

Suggested Talking Points

Plutonium pit production is unnecessary.

- There is no evidence that aging of existing plutonium pits will affect the safety and reliability of the existing nuclear stockpile for many years to come.
- The new pits are being produced for newly designed nuclear weapons that are also unnecessary.
- A PEIS is meant to precede federal actions, not come after the fact, but this analysis was carried out retroactively to rubber stamp a program that is already years in the making. Furthermore, it does not allow for consideration of “reasonable alternatives” as required by the National Environmental Policy Act, which stipulates how such analyses should be done.
- A proper PEIS should address the cumulative impacts of a program across all sites concerned. This one does not—it fails to address increased impacts at the Kansas City National Security Campus (Missouri), Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (California), the Nevada National Security Site (Nevada), Pantex (Texas), the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (New Mexico), and the Y-12 site (Tennessee).
- **Conclusion:** NNSA must consider a true “no-action” alternative where plutonium pits for new nuclear weapons are *not* produced, rather than the version in the PEIS that continues to expand production.
- **Conclusion:** The NNSA must account for impacts from and to the Kansas City Plant, Lawrence Livermore National Lab, the Nevada National Security Site, Pantex, the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, and the surrounding areas.
- The human and environmental risks inherent to plutonium are no different today than in the past. History has shown that nuclear weapons production results in heavy environmental burdens at the sites where it occurred and to the health of workers who carried out the work.
- Communities surrounding the two main production sites, Los Alamos National Laboratory (New Mexico) and the Savannah River Site (South Carolina), include vulnerable populations—women, children, and low-income residents—who should not be forced to bear the potential environmental and health consequences that come with new pit production. The PEIS fails to analyze the true risks to the most vulnerable populations and relies on generous assumptions to calculate risk.
- Plutonium pit production is stalling efforts to clean up legacy waste at Los Alamos and Savannah River.
- The PEIS outlines increased nuclear waste storage at both Los Alamos and Savannah River, including some low-level waste that, for Savannah River, could be disposed of and buried permanently onsite. Both locations already have unremediated toxic waste that is now being deprioritized in favor of weapons production. Pit production is only likely to exacerbate these pre-existing problems.
- The draft PEIS does not transparently describe potential hazards stemming from transportation. Enormous amounts of radioactive materials and waste will be transported by road across much of the southern United States, but the PEIS does nothing to explain potential impacts to communities along these routes. Between 400 and 500 shipments of waste and plutonium per year will be required from each site.
- New pit production risks fueling a global arms race that cannot be won. It signals to the world that the United States is doubling down on its reliance on nuclear weapons. Production of new US weapons is likely to encourage nuclear proliferation elsewhere at a time when geopolitical tensions are already high.

Plutonium pit production is potentially dangerous.

- The impacts of accidents are analyzed within a 50-mile radius of the facilities, but a worst-case accident could result in health burdens that extend further.

History has shown that nuclear weapons production results in heavy environmental burdens at the sites where it occurred, and to the health of workers who carried out the work.

Pit production is touted as a jobs producer, but the jobs it creates are dangerous and the money spent is unlikely to go to the communities doing the work.

- **Conclusion:** The NNSA should include analysis for vulnerable populations such as children, women, low-income, Indigenous, and rural communities not represented in traditional exposure limits.
- **Conclusion:** The PEIS must address how the NNSA will protect workers, and acknowledge and address accidents that have already occurred at Los Alamos.
- **Conclusion:** The NNSA should expand the accident impact radius beyond 50 miles to account for worst-case scenarios such as facility fires. Additionally, the NNSA must account for the cumulative impacts of other chemicals in the environment.
- **Conclusion:** The final PEIS must address long-term plans for nuclear waste management.

Plutonium pit production is expensive.

- Pit production at Los Alamos will nearly double the lab's consumption of water, electrical power, and petroleum fuel. Projections for future operations at the Savannah River Site also include significant increases.
- By resuming nuclear weapons production across the US nuclear complex, it is ordinary people who will pay the costs. Pit production is touted as a jobs producer, but the jobs it creates are dangerous and the money spent is unlikely to go to the communities doing the work.
- Funds are being diverted from cleanup efforts to plutonium pit production—which only kicks that can down the road.
- The true cost of the pit production project is unknown; the NNSA has not provided a cost estimate or schedule.
- **Conclusion:** The NNSA must produce a comprehensive cost estimate and schedule for the pit production program.
- **Conclusion:** The final PEIS must include a clear and comprehensive assessment of increased water and energy uses at both Los Alamos and Savannah River.

For more information about the plutonium pit program and PEIS, visit pitpeis.com.



Scan the QR code or visit act.ucs.org/PEISreportback to let us know you submitted your comment opposing plans to produce plutonium pits.

Need more help drafting your comment? Reach out to Hunter Noffsinger at hnoffsinger@ucs.org.