

August 25, 2021

The Honorable Liz Cheney  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Cheney:

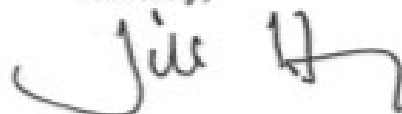
Thank you for your letter requesting the Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration (DOE/NNSA) provide clarification on plutonium pit production levels, timelines, and potential impacts to the W87-1, which will be fielded on the Ground Based Strategic Deterrent (GBSD). DOE/NNSA currently assesses there are no impacts to the planned production of the W87-1 warhead based on the latest results for pit production capacities and timelines. The Department of Defense (DoD) and the United States Air Force have responsibility for the Mk21A reentry vehicle and we therefore cannot address that aspect of your request for clarification.

Pits produced at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) are key to meeting W87-1 military requirements and production. Based on the latest LANL pit production facility conceptual designs and cost and schedule ranges, producing 30 War Reserve (WR) pits per year (ppy) at LANL in 2026 is still achievable. The plans for LANL pit production and the W87-1 warhead were each established with considerable time margin between achieving 30 WR ppy in 2026 and warhead First Production Unit (FPU) in 2030. This approach enables DOE/NNSA to secure an inventory of pits prior to warhead FPU. However, it is acknowledged that this approach does carry risk in that any currently unanticipated, long-term disruptions to pit manufacturing at LANL would impact W87-1 deliveries until the second pit manufacturing capability at Savannah River Site becomes available.

DOE/NNSA and DoD continue to work to ensure program management for both GBSD and the W87-1 are synchronized. The W87-0, currently deployed on Minuteman III, will be the initial warhead deployed on GBSD and activities to achieve this implementation are on schedule. The W87-1 will be the second warhead deployed on GBSD.

DOE/NNSA is committed to continued coordination with DoD to identify options to mitigate risks to W87-1 production. If you have any additional questions, please contact Dr. Howard Dickenson, Acting Associate Administrator for External Affairs, at (202) 586-7332.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jill Hruby". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jill Hruby