



## **Cut Funding for the Nuclear Bunker Buster: Support the Kennedy-Feinstein Amendment to S. 2400**

June 2, 2004

Dear Senator:

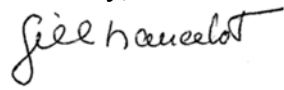
Taxpayers for Common Sense Action (TCS Action), a nonpartisan budget watchdog group, supports Senators Kennedy (D-MA) and Feinstein's (D-CA) amendment to S. 2400, the *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005*. This amendment strikes funding for the Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator (RNEP), or nuclear bunker buster. The military has not yet drafted a requirement for RNEP and the project has been criticized for the Cold War mentality that drives it. Faced with a record deficit the administration predicts will surpass \$520 billion in fiscal year 2004, Congress should reign in this expensive, unnecessary program.

The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) tries to defend its work on RNEP on the grounds that they are only doing research. Research, however, should get no special protection from the axe, and NNSA officials have made a poor case for further study of RNEP. They frequently cite the inadequacy of conventional bunker busters, but RNEP is not the solution. Because bunker busters cannot burrow deeper than approximately 15 meters before breaking up, the fallout from a nuclear bunker buster could not possibly be contained. Any strike with RNEP or a similar weapon would result in enormous collateral damage, rendering the weapon useless as a surgically precise tool, and a poor deterrent by comparison to the rest of our nuclear arsenal. By the admission of NNSA administrator Linton Brooks, he is "not sure" what sort of threat a low-yield nuclear weapon might be used to deter and has "no idea" how the fallout could be contained.

The current price tag of RNEP is \$27.5 million, but that cost will inflate rapidly over the next five years, costing nearly half a billion over that time span. RNEP is an unnecessary drain on the taxpayer's purse, and the effort to cut it from the federal budget has united arms control advocates and fiscal conservatives alike. As our country faces staggering deficits in the coming years, every federal program must be looked upon with a skeptical eye. RNEP simply does not stand up to this level of scrutiny, and should be terminated immediately. These realities prompted House Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman Representative Hobson (R-OH) to slash the fiscal year 2004 budget for RNEP by half and write in the conference report, "It appears to the Committee the Department is proposing to rebuild, restart, and redo and otherwise exercise every capability that was used over the past forty years of the Cold War and at the same time prepare for a future with an expanded mission for nuclear weapons."

Again, we urge you to support the Kennedy-Feinstein amendment to cut all funds for the Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator. For more information, please contact Austin Clemens at (202) 546-8500 x106 or [austin@taxpayer.net](mailto:austin@taxpayer.net).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jill Lancelot".

Jill Lancelot  
President