



February 3, 2023

The Honorable Jill M. Hruby
Administrator
National Nuclear Security Administration
1000 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20585

RE: NNSA Mission Readiness - Improving NNSA Infrastructure and Programs through Partnerships with NNSA's Frontline Communities

Dear Administrator Hruby:

On behalf of the Energy Communities Alliance (“ECA”)¹, I write to you regarding opportunities to increase collaboration between the National Nuclear Security Administration (“NNSA”) and the communities that host NNSA sites to improve NNSA infrastructure and programs. We have an opportunity to jointly address the shortage of housing and workforce, improve NNSA working conditions, access to clean, reliable and resilient energy and utilities, and improve transportation. All of this can occur through joint NNSA leadership and municipalities working together.

As noted by Congress, NNSA should focus on the long-term nature of the mission both inside and outside the proverbial fence line of NNSA sites to ensure it can recruit and retain the best and brightest scientists, engineers and workforce in the country. This issue is not new to NNSA, and leadership² can focus on the partnerships with communities and create long term investment in infrastructure for the sites.

NNSA Mission Readiness

A good model for NNSA is at the Department of Defense (“DOD”), which recognized this need over a decade ago and created the *Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation* to “further the priorities of the National Defense Strategy by supporting the readiness and resiliency of military installations and defense communities across the country.” The DOD program has seven core initiatives:

¹ ECA represents the communities and local governments adjacent to DOE and NNSA activities, and our communities have a long history of hosting and supporting these agencies’ missions dating back to the Manhattan Project and Cold War nuclear weapons program. NNSA’s employees and contractors live and work in ECA communities. More information is available at www.energyca.org.

² The programs implemented by Administrators Brooks, D’Agostino and Klotz are all models that can be built on by this Administration.

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- Construction
 - Mission Alignment
 - Industry Resilience
 - Installation Resilience
 - Defense Community Infrastructure Pilot Program
 - Defense Manufacturing Community Support
 - Intergovernmental Affairs Program

Given the critical defense missions of NNSA and DOD, an initiative modeled after the DOD program would strengthen NNSA’s engagement with the public and its ability to accomplish important national security, science, and defense missions.

By improving the areas “outside the fence,” there are several mutual benefits to NNSA sites and to those who live nearby. Such investments by NNSA into the communities and the communities to support the missions would help workforce recruitment, improve facility resilience, ensure safety, improve operational efficiency, and potentially create cost savings long-term. Further, whereas DOD needed a new authority to work with its host local governments, NNSA has the legal authority in 42 U.S.C. § 2201 and good models of successful initiatives implemented by NNSA Administrators Brooks, D’Agostino and Klotz.

National engagement with state, local, tribal governments by NNSA leadership

“The foundation of good governance lies in NNSA having healthy relationships with its stakeholders.”³ To strengthen this partnership and work toward our mutual goals, ECA proposes that NNSA create a plan to engage with state, local, and tribal governments based on the Department of Energy Office of Environmental Management’s (EM) engagement plan, which is a model for the Department (including NNSA). At a minimum, ECA would suggest:

- 1) Engagement with the NNSA Administrator at least annually at a meeting which can be a standalone or as part of EM’s annual meeting with the intergovernmental groups in the Fall;
- 2) Regular communication directly from NNSA headquarters to the frontline communities, especially the local governments.

Additionally, NNSA has statutory authority to contract with local governments to “utilize or employ the services or personnel of any Government agency or any State or local government.”⁴ Local governments represented by ECA are your advocates in Washington and are your partners in the communities. Coordination between NNSA leadership and NNSA staff to ensure engagement with local governments must remain (and on some cases become) a priority. We look forward to working together on critical issues such as housing and building the next generation of the workforce.

³ Advance Policy Questions for Jill M. Hruby, Senate Armed Services Committee, May 2021.

⁴ 42 U.S.C. § 2201(f)

We strongly urge NNSA to use municipalities as a resource for improved mission development, services, partnership, and support. Regular communication and engagement by NNSA leadership and municipalities will build the relationship that is needed to ensure the success of NNSA missions.

We welcome the opportunity to meet with you this year to discuss potential programs to work together.

Sincerely,



Mayor Brent Gerry
West Richland, WA
Chair, Energy Communities Alliance

cc: Rebecca Casper, Mayor, Idaho Falls, Idaho; Vice-Chair, ECA
Seth Kirshenberg, Executive Director, ECA
Amanda Quinones, Acting Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, NNSA
Denise Derkacs, Council Chair, Los Alamos County, New Mexico
Bruce Jabbour, Commission Chair, Nye County, Nevada
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