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June 2, 2026

Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump,

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is moving ahead with plans to give 20 metric tons of weapons-usable plutonium—enough for approximately 2,000 nuclear bombs—to private industry for commercial energy use. If implemented, this would be the first time the U.S. government has made weapons-grade plutonium available to private companies. These plans go against long-standing bipartisan U.S. nuclear security policy, raise serious weapons proliferation concerns, make little economic sense and raise conflict of interest issues. I urge you to cancel this misguided scheme.

According to recent press reports, your administration's Surplus Plutonium Utilization Program would make roughly 20 metric tons of Cold War-era plutonium—sourced from military stocks and previously slated for disposal—available to U.S. power companies as potential reactor fuel.¹ An executive order that you signed in May 2025 halted the existing “dilute and dispose” program, replacing it with a scheme that would supply the plutonium at little to no cost, though industry would shoulder the expenses and logistical responsibilities of transporting, processing, and converting it into usable fuel.²

As I have written to you before, the transfer of weapons-usable plutonium to private industry would increase the risk of nuclear weapons proliferation, including to rogue states or terrorists.³ For five decades, the United States has avoided the commercial use of plutonium and

¹ Brad Plumer, *U.S. Seeks to Give Weapons-Grade Plutonium to Start-Ups for Fuel*, N.Y. Times (May 26, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/05/26/climate/plutonium-nuclear-weapons-fuel.html>.

² Exec. Order No. 14302, 90 Fed. Reg. 22595 (May 23, 2025), <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/05/29/2025-09801/reinvigorating-the-nuclear-industrial-base>.

³ Letter from Senator Edward J. Markey, et al., to Donald J. Trump, President of the United States (Sept. 10, 2025), <https://www.markey.senate.gov/news/press-releases/markey-garamendi-beyer-raise-alarm-on-us-plan-to-transfer-plutonium-to-private-industry>.

opposed the spread of technology to separate (“reprocess”) plutonium from used reactor fuel. We did so to prevent nations with nuclear power plants (such as Iran) from being able to extract plutonium from that fuel, which they—or terrorists into whose hands it could fall—could use to make nuclear weapons.

Indeed, in the mid-1970s, both Presidents Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter established nonproliferation policies to avoid the use of plutonium fuel domestically and to strongly discourage it abroad.⁴ Today, among the more than 30 countries with nuclear energy, many of which previously explored using plutonium fuel, only one —France—still uses it widely. Your plan—which would provide U.S. companies with plutonium from U.S. military stocks and subsidize them both to reprocess plutonium domestically and export reprocessing technology—would reverse our successful nonproliferation policy. The United States cannot effectively discourage other countries from using plutonium for civil purposes if we use it ourselves.

Further, using surplus plutonium in nuclear energy is significantly more expensive than disposing of it as waste. During your first administration, the Department of Energy canceled its plans to process surplus plutonium into reactor fuel due to the prohibitive cost of the reactor route (\$49 billion) compared to the cost of treating the surplus plutonium as waste (\$20 billion).⁵ Due to this major difference in cost, DOE opted to dispose of the plutonium instead. To be clear, commercial nuclear energy does not require separated plutonium, and today there is no global demand for plutonium to make civilian nuclear reactor fuel. Nuclear power reactors instead rely on uranium fuel, which is safer and cheaper to process.

Finally, DOE said that it has selected five companies to enter “advanced negotiations” to potentially receive surplus plutonium: Oklo, Standard Nuclear, Exodys Energy, SHINE Technologies and Flibe Energy. Your Secretary of Energy, Chris Wright, used to serve on the Board of Directors of Oklo. As I have written to you before, I am concerned that your Administration is moving forward with plans to give plutonium to Oklo not because this makes sense for the United States, but because Oklo stands to benefit financially and Secretary Wright

⁴ See Anthony Andrews, *Nuclear Fuel Reprocessing: U.S. Policy Development*, CRS Report for Congress (Mar. 27, 2008),

<https://sgp.fas.org/crs/nuke/RS22542.pdf>.

⁵ U.S. Government Accountability Office, GAO-19-25, DOE and NNSA Should Improve Their Lessons-Learned Process for Capital Asset Projects, Report to the Ranking Member, Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, U.S. Senate (Dec. 2018),

<https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-19-25.pdf>;

U.S. Government Accountability Office, GAO-20-166, Surplus Plutonium Disposition: NNSA’s Long-Term Plutonium Oxide Production Plans Are Uncertain, Report to the Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Senate (Oct. 2019),

<https://www.gao.gov/assets/710/705783.pdf>.

is acting in his former company's interest. Secretary Wright's close ties to the company present an appearance of impropriety.⁶

Given the gravity of these concerns, I request your responses to the following questions in writing by June 15, 2026:

1. Given the proliferation risks of plutonium, why should the U.S. government facilitate the transfer of plutonium to private industry and the development and export of proliferation-prone reprocessing technologies?

2. In what forms will the surplus plutonium be transferred? Will the administration require any processing of the plutonium, and if so, what is the estimated cost of this processing and who will pay for it?

3. What safety and security measures are planned for the transport of weapons-grade plutonium to private actors? What steps will be taken to ensure that companies receiving plutonium are taking adequate measures to safely store and utilize plutonium?

4. What role did Secretary Wright play in the selection of Oklo for the Surplus Plutonium Utilization Program?

5. Does Secretary Wright currently have a financial stake in Oklo and does he stand to benefit in any way from Oklo's role in this program?

6. Are there other senior officials in the Administration with connections to Oklo or the other companies involved?

I appreciate your prompt attention to these concerns.

Sincerely,



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator

⁶ Letter from Senator Edward J. Markey to Donald J. Trump, President of the United States (Sept. 23, 2025), <https://www.markey.senate.gov/news/press-releases/markey-calls-out-energy-secretarys-conflict-of-interest-with-oklo-and-transfer-of-nuclear-materials>.