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Senators Oppose U.S. Nuclear Reprocessing Plan, Cite Proliferation Concerns

The Nuclear Age Peace Foundation applauds the recent efforts of U.S. senators to eliminate funding for the Department of Energy's plan to reprocess commercial nuclear waste and ship the resulting weapons-usable nuclear material to fuel nuclear reactors around the world under the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership.

In a letter sent, on April 24th, to Chairman Byron Dorgan and Ranking Member Pete Domenici of the Senate Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee, nine U.S. senators state: "We write in opposition to Department of Energy's (DOE) fiscal year 2009 request for over \$300 million to reprocess commercial nuclear spent fuel." The letter highlights key concerns related to reprocessing, including: past failures, exorbitant costs, environmental contamination, and the proliferation of weapons-usable nuclear material and technology.

Despite failing to respond to Congressional demands for more information about life cycle costs, proliferation implications, and waste streams, the Bush administration is requesting more than \$300 million for reprocessing in 2009. Last year, Congress reduced the administration's request of \$405 million to \$179 million.

Nick Roth, the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation's Washington, DC Director, commented: "This letter reflects a growing consensus throughout the United States that the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership is a poorly conceived program with serious environmental, security and fiscal implications."

The senators who signed were **Russ Feingold** (D-WI), **Ron Wyden** (D-OR), **John Kerry** (D-MA), **Charles Schumer** (D-NY), **Daniel Akaka** (D-HI), **Bernard Sanders** (I-VT), **Tom Harkin** (D-IA), **Edward Kennedy** (D-MA) and **Sherrod Brown** (D-OH).

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