

TRIBUTE TO LIEUTENANT
COMMANDER STEVEN DAVIES

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH. Madam President, I am pleased to commend LCDR Steven Davies for his dedication to duty and service as a U.S. Coast Guard congressional fellow on my staff. Steve was recently selected to serve as executive officer of USCGC *Thetis* and will soon depart to fulfill that important responsibility.

A native of Lebanon, PA, Steve was commissioned after his graduation from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, where he earned a bachelor of science degree in management, served as vice president of his class, and captained the men's soccer team. He is in the process of earning a master's degree.

Steve has served in a broad range of assignments during his Coast Guard career. He has served overseas in Kuwait and deployed with Patrol Forces Southwest Asia in support of Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom, conducted national security missions on five ships in the Arabian Gulf. In addition to deployments overseas, he has served in vital roles in support of U.S. security interests. As commanding officer of USCGC *Sailfish*, he led search and rescue operations and various law enforcement missions in the Port of New York and New Jersey. As Commanding Officer of USCGC *Kathleen Moore*, Steve led a 26-person crew that interdicted \$18 million of cocaine and nearly 700 undocumented migrants attempting to reach the United States.

Most recently, Steve served as the congressional fellow on my staff and, prior to that, for the Honorable Senator Thad Cochran of Mississippi. Steve's operational experience in the Gulf of Mexico, Southwest Asia, and the Arabian Gulf, in addition to his technical expertise in counterdrug and migrant interdictions, search and rescue operations, and law enforcement missions, have been pivotal in helping to shape Department of Homeland Security and U.S. Coast Guard appropriations for fiscal years 2018 and 2019.

As a congressional fellow, he has served the State of Mississippi, the Coast Guard, and our Nation admirably. My staff and I have enjoyed the benefit of Steve's counsel and have truly enjoyed working with him. Steve's leadership has brought great credit to the Coast Guard, and I appreciate and commend his commitment to continue to serve our nation.

It is a pleasure to recognize and thank LCDR Steve Davies for his service to this country. My staff and I extend our gratitude to Steve and wish him "Fair winds and following seas" as he continues his journey in the U.S. Coast Guard.

NATIONAL NUCLEAR SECURITY
ADMINISTRATION FISCAL YEAR
2020 BUDGET REQUEST

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a copy of

my opening statement at the Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development's budget hearing for the National Nuclear Security Administration's fiscal year 2020 budget request be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

NATIONAL NUCLEAR SECURITY ADMINISTRATION
FISCAL YEAR 2020 BUDGET REQUEST

Mr. ALEXANDER. The Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development will please come to order.

Today's hearing will review the administration's fiscal year 2020 budget request for the National Nuclear Security Administration.

This is the second of the Subcommittee's four budget hearings this year.

We heard from Secretary Perry last week, and we'll have two more hearings in the coming weeks to review the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation budget requests.

Senator Feinstein and I will each have an opening statement.

I will then recognize each Senator for up to five minutes for an opening statement, alternating between the majority and minority, in the order in which they arrived.

We will then turn to Administrator Lisa Gordon-Hagerty to present testimony on behalf of the National Nuclear Security Administration and then give Admiral Frank Caldwell an opportunity to give a brief statement.

At the conclusion of the witnesses' testimony, I will then recognize Senators for five minutes of questions each, alternating between the majority and minority in the order in which they arrived.

First, I would like to thank our witnesses for being here today, and also Senator Feinstein, with whom I have the pleasure to work with again this year to draft the Energy and Water Appropriations bill.

Our witnesses today include: Ms. Lisa Gordon-Hagerty, the Administrator of the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA); Dr. Charles Verdon, Deputy Administrator for Defense Programs; Dr. Brent Park, Deputy Administrator for Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation (Dr. Park is a former Associate Laboratory Director from Oak Ridge National Laboratory); and Admiral Frank Caldwell, Deputy Administrator for Naval Reactors.

Our subcommittee has a good record of being the first of the appropriations bills to be considered by the Committee and by the Senate each year. For each of the past four years, Senator Feinstein and I have been able to have our bill signed into law.

Last year, we worked together in a bipartisan way on the fiscal year 2019 Energy and Water Development Appropriations bill that was signed into law before the start of the fiscal year—the first time that happened since 2000.

In last year's appropriations bill we provided \$15.2 billion for the National Nuclear Security Administration, including \$1.9 billion for the six life extension programs, which fix or replace components in weapons systems to make sure they're safe and reliable.

We also funded the Uranium Processing Facility at the Y-12 National Security Complex at \$703 million, which will continue to keep this project on time and on budget, with a completion year of 2025 at a cost no greater than \$6.5 billion.

I look forward to working with Senator Feinstein on another strong bill this year.

We're here today to review the administration's fiscal year 2020 budget request for the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), the semi-autonomous agency within the Department of Energy that is responsible for a vital mission—maintaining our nuclear weapons stockpile, reducing the global dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction, and providing the Navy with safe and effective nuclear power.

The president's fiscal year 2020 budget request for the NNSA is \$16.5 billion, an increase of \$1.3 billion (or 8 percent) over last year (the fiscal year 2019 enacted level).

Today, I'd like to focus my remarks and questions on three main areas:

1. Effectively maintaining our nuclear weapons stockpile;
2. Keeping critical projects on time and on budget; and
3. Supporting our nuclear Navy.

When the Senate agreed to ratify the New Start Treaty in December 2010, we also agreed to support funding to modernize and maintain our nuclear weapons stockpile, plus the facilities to do the work. A vital part of NNSA's mission is completion of the five ongoing life extension programs, which fix or replace components in weapons systems to make sure they're safe and reliable. The budget request includes \$2.1 billion to continue the life extension programs. I want to make sure we are spending taxpayer dollars effectively.

Completing all of the work that needs to be done for these weapons systems will result in a higher workload than the weapons program has had in any time since the height of the Cold War, and it will require a large number of highly-trained experts at the production sites, like Y-12 in Oak Ridge Tennessee, the weapons laboratories, and the federal employees that work for NNSA. I'd like to hear more today about whether NNSA has enough qualified people to do this work. I would also like to discuss today whether NNSA will be able to keep the life extension programs on time and on budget.

The NNSA is responsible for some of the largest construction projects in the federal government. Senator Feinstein and I have worked hard to keep costs from skyrocketing. We want to make sure hard-earned taxpayer dollars are spent wisely and that these projects are on time and on budget.

First we focused on our oversight on the Uranium Processing Facility in Tennessee. We held routine meetings with the Department's leadership to discuss the project—particularly how the Department implemented the recommendations of a Red Team review, completed in 2014, to get the project on track.

After completing more than 90% of the design for the nuclear facilities, NNSA began construction of the Uranium Processing Facility last year. I'd like to hear more about the progress on construction from the witnesses today.

Senator Feinstein and I also worked with the Department on ways to get excess plutonium out of South Carolina more quickly and for less cost. Last year, Secretary Perry canceled the MOX project in favor of the Dilute and Disposal alternative, which the Department of Energy estimated will save taxpayers more than \$20 billion. I'd like to hear more today on the progress NNSA is making at removing the plutonium from South Carolina.

Lastly, the NNSA is restarting our ability to make plutonium pits for the stockpile. The budget request includes \$712 million for plutonium sustainment, which is 97% more than the current funding level. This difficult, but important work, will be done in New Mexico and South Carolina. The NNSA has