

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

December 19, 2016

The Honorable Ray Mabus  
Secretary of the Navy  
1000 Navy Pentagon Room 4E686  
Washington DC, 20350

Dear Secretary Mabus:

Throughout your time serving as the Secretary of the Navy, you and the Department of Defense have sought to support the men and women in uniform, their families, and our national security. Through your leadership, and the hard work of many others, the United States Navy has maintained its position as the most powerful in the world. As advocates of the Navy and beneficiaries of its service, we write out of concern for its long-term readiness, and have specific concerns regarding the ultimate disposal of the United States Ship (USS) Enterprise (CVN-65).

It has come to our attention that the Department, Naval Reactors in particular, is considering several options for the disposal of the reactor compartments of the USS Enterprise including potential outsourcing through the use of a private entity or entities. As you are aware, the nuclear reactor compartments of every nuclear powered naval vessel, other than the USS Nautilus, has been dismantled and disposed at the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard (PSNS) and the Hanford Nuclear Reservation (Trench 94) in the State of Washington. We have several concerns with this proposal to outsource what have been federal responsibilities.

The Navy and Department have made substantial investments in the facilities and workforce to complete nuclear reactor compartment dismantlement and disposal at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard. The work associated with the reactor compartments of the USS Enterprise is critically important to maintaining the robust and skilled workforce at PSNS.

Maximizing previous investments in human and material capital, as well as the proven processes that have made the reactor compartment disposal program successful is critical to ensuring that the risk to public safety and the environment remains low. Moreover, continuing to draw upon the relationship between PSNS and the Hanford site, and the security, safety, and economic benefits afforded by the U.S. Department of Energy's personnel and capacity makes sense.

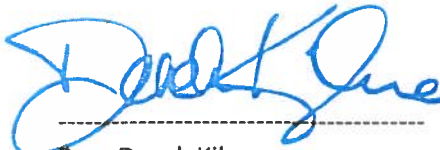
We are very concerned with several of the Department's assumptions on the use of a private entity or entities, including regulatory nuclear licensing requirements, liability for any possible harm to human health and the environment, long-term disposal costs, impacts to future nuclear disposal projects and personnel security clearances. We therefore ask that the Department delay any decision on the disposal of the reactor compartments of the USS Enterprise until all information is available. Moreover, it is important to recognize that the Department's actions in this regard would impact other governmental and non-governmental entities. We have the responsibility to ensure that any potential decision fall within existing authorization, budget capacity, and sound public policy.

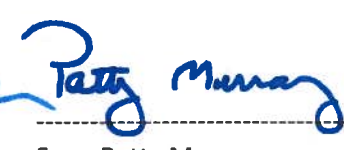
As advocates of the Navy, we want what is best for the Department and what is safest for those it protects. We ask that you meet with us to discuss these and other concerns before a decision is made and thank you in advance for respecting our request to understand the full implications of a potential


change to the Navy's long-standing practice for dismantling and disposing of naval reactor compartments.

We thank you for your consideration of our requests and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

  
Rep. Derek Kilmer

  
Sen. Patty Murray

  
Sen. Maria Cantwell

  
Rep. Adam Smith

  
Rep. Joe Courtney

  
Rep. Jim Cooper

  
Rep. Marcy Kaptur

  
Rep. C.A. Dutch Ruppberger

  
Rep. Tom Cole

  
Rep. Rick Larsen

  
Rep. Rob Bishop

  
Rep. Walter Jones

  
Rep. Donald Norcross

  
Rep. Dan Newhouse

  
Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler

  
Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers

  
Rep. Denny Heck

  
Rep. David Reichert

  
Rep. Suzan DelBene

  
Rep. Frank LoBiondo