

March 17, 2015

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on Defense
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Pete Visclosky
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on Defense
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Frelinghuysen and Ranking Member Visclosky:

As you consider the fiscal year 2016 Defense Appropriations bill, we write to express our strong support for funding the Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives (ACWA) Program and the Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program (CSEPP) to the levels identified in the Department of Defense's Chemical Agents and Munitions Destruction Budget Request.

Adequate funding for these programs is vital for the United States to meet its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) arms control treaty expeditiously and with appropriate safeguards. As representatives of Kentucky and Colorado – home to the remaining sites slated for demilitarization under the CWC, the Blue Grass Army Depot and the Pueblo Chemical Depot, respectively – we know all too well that our constituents have waited decades for these sites to be demilitarized and the ageing munitions to be destroyed. A fire or atmospheric release at either of these sites due to delays or inadequate resources would severely threaten public health and safety and the environment.

Fiscal year 2016 funding at the level of the Department of Defense request of \$569.3 million for the ACWA program will allow operations at the Blue Grass Chemical Agency Destruction Pilot Plant (BGCAPP) and the Pueblo Chemical Agent Destruction Pilot Plant (PCAPP) to move forward according to schedule. Funding the CSEPP to the requested level of \$50.7 million will provide needed funds to state and local governments to enhance emergency response management for our constituents in the event of an accident or fire at one of these federal facilities.

In order to fulfill American treaty obligations and protect the health and safety of the American people, we urge you to provide the funding necessary to ensure that the neutralization of these agents goes according to the schedule outlined by the Department of Defense. Any delay unnecessarily endangers the lives of our constituents in nearby communities and extends the duration and cost to federal taxpayers' financial support for the maintenance of these antiquated and dangerous weapons stockpiles. Thank you for your consideration of these requests.

Sincerely,

Andy Barr
Member of Congress

Scott Tipton
Member of Congress