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May 13, 2011

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
Room S 128, the Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Chair
Subcommittee on Energy and
Water Development
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate, SD-184
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Committee
Room S 128, the Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy and
Water Development
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate, SD-188
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators:

On behalf of Western Governors, we strongly urge you to fully support the Department of Energy's Environmental Management Program (EM) during the critical FY 2012 budget negotiations and deliberations which are underway.

You are well aware of the nation's legal obligations to clean up and remediate the federal nuclear weapons manufacturing and testing sites across the nation. Those obligations are taken seriously in our western states. Equally important to the citizens of our respective states are the environmental benefits provided by this proven program to resolve the effects of the Cold War legacy of the U.S. nuclear weapons production operations. DOE's EM program is necessary to responsibly honor promises made to state and local governments to reduce risks to citizens and communities and to restore the environment. It is essential to continue the federal government's exemplary progress in relieving future generations from environmental and financial liabilities.

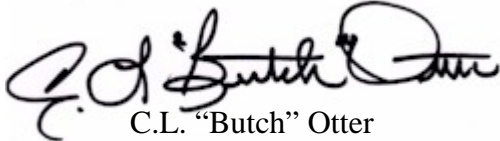
The EM program has proven successes and with continued support of EM funding in the FY 2012 budget development, the contaminated footprint of these sites nationwide will be greatly reduced.

DOE must have a sustainable cleanup budget. Without steady and reliable EM funding from year to year, environmental compliance and risk management at these sites will be prolonged, jeopardizing the impressive gains made to date and unacceptably extending their dangers far into the future. As Western Governors we are committed to cleaning up these sites as expeditiously as possible.


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We believe you share our understanding of the magnitude of the DOE's cleanup tasks and urge you to continue the progress by ensuring the FY 2012 budget for the EM program is fully funded. Reduced or unreliable funding will likely result in increased costs in out years from site contamination spreading as well as failures to comply with binding commitments made to states.

Sincerely,



C.L. "Butch" Otter
Governor of Idaho
Chairman



Christine O. Gregoire
Governor of Washington
Vice Chair

cc: Senate Appropriations Committee Members
Western Senate Delegation
The Honorable Steven Chu, Secretary of Energy
Ines Triay, Assistant Secretary, DOE Office of Environmental Management