ENERGY-WATER APPROPRIATIONS/Cut in Funding for Nuclear Safety

SUBJECT: **Energy and Water Development Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 1997 . . . S. 1959. Domenici motion to table the Bumpers amendment No. 5096.**

ACTION: MOTION TO TABLE AGREED TO, 61-37

SYNOPSIS: As reported, S. 1959, the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 1997, will provide $20.735 billion in new budget authority to the Department of Defense's Civil Corps of Engineers, to the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Reclamation, to the relevant offices within the Department of Energy, and to related independent agencies and commissions.

The Bumpers amendment would reduce total funding for atomic energy weapons activities by $268.6 million, resulting in total funding of $3.710 billion (the amount requested).

Debate was limited by unanimous consent. Senator Domenici moved to table the Bumpers amendment. Generally, those favoring the motion to table opposed the amendment; those opposing the motion to table favored the amendment.

Those favoring the motion to table contended:

This bill will provide more in funding for nuclear weapons activities than the President requested because the President did not request enough funding for nuclear stockpile stewardship and management needs. That funding is largely needed, as all Senators should be aware, because of the President's decision not to conduct further nuclear tests. That decision has made it necessary to develop other means of ensuring the safety and reliability of our nuclear weapons. The President's own budget notes that more money is needed than requested, and Department of Energy experts have pegged the shortfall in the Administration's request at about $300 million. Of the $269 million increase that this bill will provide, $82.5 million will be spend on stockpile stewardship (largely to develop computer modeling of nuclear explosions as a replacement for actual nuclear tests) and $171 million will be spent on stockpile management ($50 million of which will be to develop new tritium production capabilities). Of course, no Senator is a

(See other side)

YEAS (61)			NAYS (37)			NOT VOTING (2)	
Republicans (50 or 96%)		**Democrats (11 or 24%)**	**Republicans (2 or 4%)**	**Democrats (35 or 76%)**		**Republicans (1)**	**Democrats (1)**
Abraham	Inhofe	Bingaman	Brown	Akaka	Kennedy	Frahm-[2]	Pell-[2AN]
Ashcroft	Jeffords	Breaux	Hatfield	Baucus	Kerrey		
Bennett	Kassebaum	Bryan		Biden	Kerry		
Bond	Kempthorne	Feinstein		Boxer	Kohl		
Burns	Kyl	Heflin		Bradley	Lautenberg		
Campbell	Lott	Hollings		Bumpers	Leahy		
Chafee	Lugar	Inouye		Byrd	Levin		
Coats	Mack	Johnston		Conrad	Lieberman		
Cochran	McCain	Nunn		Daschle	Mikulski		
Cohen	McConnell	Reid		Dodd	Moseley-Braun		
Coverdell	Murkowski	Robb		Dorgan	Moynihan		
Craig	Nickles			Exon	Murray		
D'Amato	Pressler			Feingold	Pryor		
DeWine	Roth			Ford	Rockefeller		
Domenici	Santorum			Glenn	Sarbanes		
Faircloth	Shelby			Graham	Simon		
Frist	Simpson			Harkin	Wellstone		
Gorton	Smith				Wyden		
Gramm	Snowe						
Grams	Specter						
Grassley	Stevens						
Gregg	Thomas						
Hatch	Thompson						
Helms	Thurmond						
Hutchison	Warner						

EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:
1—Official Buisiness
2—Necessarily Absent
3—Illness
4—Other

SYMBOLS:
AY—Announced Yea
AN—Announced Nay
PY—Paired Yea
PN—Paired Nay

nuclear engineer. Senators must rely on expert advice on this issue. Experts have said that the amount the Administration requested is not enough. We therefore oppose the Bumpers amendment to cut funding to that level.

Those opposing the motion to table contended:

We do not understand the details of nuclear physics, but one need only understand grade-school math to understand the merit of the Bumpers amendment. On bill after bill this Congress, we have seen funding for numerous extremely meritorious programs cut. Those cuts have come in social welfare programs, in agricultural research programs, in health care programs, and in numerous other programs great and small that have very obvious benefits for the American people. Increases in funding for any purpose have been few and far between. This bill contains one of those rare increases, and it is large--14 percent. Our colleagues who have been so anxious to cut nearly every other item in the budget have presented us a bill with a 14-percent increase for nuclear weapons. We are told that the reason for this huge increase is to improve the safety and reliability of our nuclear weapons, and we have been given rather confusing technical explanations as to why a huge increase is justified. However, those arguments are irrelevant. We also know that the Administration, which certainly has its own experts, believes that funding, at least this year, does not have to be increased so greatly, and we also know that our House colleagues came to the conclusion that the President has actually asked for too much, because the bill they passed provided $30 million less than requested. These numbers are the numbers on which Senators should focus. Our bill obviously spends way too much on nuclear weapons activities. Therefore, the Bumpers amendment should not be tabled.