



**Department of Energy**  
**Under Secretary for Nuclear Security**  
**Administrator, National Nuclear Security Administration**  
**Washington, DC 20585**



February 21, 2025

The Honorable Edward Markey  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Markey:

I am responding on behalf of the Secretary to your February 20, 2025, letter concerning reduction of staff at the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA). Your support for the NNSA workforce is greatly appreciated.

The President has enumerated in multiple executive orders his commitment to decrease the size of the Federal Government to enhance accountability, reduce waste, and promote innovation while ensuring national security and protecting public safety. Delivering on that commitment, the Department of Energy (DOE) and NNSA dismissed 27 probationary NNSA employees, whose roles were assessed to have no or minimal immediate national security or public safety impacts. As of February 20, 2025, 153 NNSA employees have requested to participate in the Deferred Resignation Program (DRP). NNSA leadership is actively reviewing these requests to determine which can be approved without unacceptable impacts on national security missions.

Please find responses to your specific questions below:

- 1. What was the rationale for the reduction in staff at the NNSA? Who determined that NNSA had too many employees and why? What is the Administration's broader strategy for responsibly ensuring adequate staffing at the NNSA that guarantees strong and effective oversight of the nuclear arsenal?**

The rationale to reduce staffing at the NNSA was in support of the Administration's commitments to decrease the size of the Federal Government and enhance accountability and reduce waste.

Decisions to terminate probationary employees were not made to achieve a specific staffing level, but by evaluating each position encumbered by a probationary employee for immediate impacts to national security and public safety.

NNSA continues to evaluate the impacts of staffing reductions through the terminations of probationary employees and the DRP. NNSA believes the mission risks from staffing reductions to date are manageable. Prior to the staffing reduction, NNSA had been intentionally increasing its staffing to align with NNSA's increased mission workload going from a single stockpile modernization program to seven stockpile modernization programs while simultaneously

modernizing critical/specialized infrastructure to meet the program of record. Any further reductions in staffing could have broader mission impacts.

**2. How many NNSA staff have been identified as probationary and for which positions?**

On January 27, 2025, NNSA was provided a list of approximately 300 probationary employees, holding a range of positions across all sub-organizations. This list included competitive and excepted service employees within probationary periods following entry into Federal service, as well as employees with longer Federal tenures, in probationary status due to recent promotion to the Senior Executive Service or supervisory roles. The positions ultimately selected for termination are enclosed.

**3. How is DOE applying national security exemptions for OPM's so-called buyout?**

DOE/NNSA requested, and received, national security exemptions from the DRP for 374 Office of Secure Transport Federal Agents, 122 Nuclear Engineers and Nuclear Program Managers in Naval Reactors, and 7 Federal Team Leads in the Nuclear Emergency Support Team. Employees filling those positions were designated as ineligible to participate in DRP due to the critical national security/public safety impact of their positions, and the complexity and rigor of the training they require.

NNSA is evaluating the full list of employees requesting to participate in the DRP to determine whether additional national security/public safety exemptions will be pursued.

**4. If NNSA employees are not exempt, will the decision on whether to accept employees' resignations include an assessment of how the loss of the employee in that role would impact DOE capabilities? If so, how will you make that assessment? Please detail all the factors you would consider.**

NNSA is evaluating the full list of employees requesting participating in the DRP to determine whether additional national security/public safety exemptions will be pursued. There is currently no option to decline an employees' request to participate in the DRP without categorical exemption of their positions based on national security or public safety. Factors include the scarcity of individuals with specific, critical skills, the loss of critical expertise, and reductions in overall NNSA capacity to execute critical national security/public safety functions due to reduced manning in specific roles.

**5. What, if any, security assessments were conducted before terminating these 350 NNSA employees?**

Decisions to terminate probationary employees were not made to achieve a specific staffing level, but by evaluating each position encumbered by a probationary employee for immediate impacts to national security and public safety. All employees who hold a security clearance are responsible to protect sensitive information regardless of employment status, in compliance with Standard Form 312, also known as the Classified Information Nondisclosure Agreement.

**6. What functions did each of these employees serve? Before the rehiring, how did DOE and NNSA plan to ensure those roles were properly staffed going forward?**

The positions selected for termination are enclosed.

NNSA continues to evaluate the impacts of recent staffing reductions through the terminations of probationary employees as well as the DRP. NNSA believes the mission risks from staffing reductions to date are manageable. Prior to the staffing reduction, NNSA had been intentionally increasing its staffing to align with NNSA's increased mission workload going from a single stockpile modernization program to seven stockpile modernization programs while simultaneously modernizing critical/specialized infrastructure to meet the program of record. Any further reductions in staffing could have broader mission impacts.

**7. Which employees have been rehired and how many have accepted the offer to come back?**

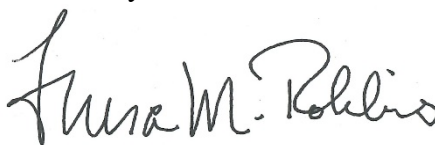
150 of 177 termination notices were rescinded. These employees have returned to work. 27 terminations remain in effect.

**8. What steps are DOE and NNSA taking to prevent unauthorized access to classified systems by DOGE members?**

NNSA follows a strict security process that is regularly audited to prevent unauthorized access to classified systems by individuals without appropriate clearance and a valid need to access the information.

If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Jason Miller, Acting Associate Administrator for Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs, at (202) 586-4418.

Sincerely,



Teresa M. Robbins  
Acting Under Secretary for Nuclear Security  
and Administrator, NNSA

Enclosure

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Organization/Position	Terminated
ASSISTANT DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR FOR SECURE TRANSPORTATION (NA-15)	
FINANCIAL SPECIALIST	1
SENIOR PROGRAM ADVISOR	1
ASSOCIATE ADMINISTRATOR FOR CONGRESSIONAL & INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS (NA-CI)	
PROGRAM ANALYST	1
ASSOCIATE ADMINISTRATOR FOR ENVIRONMENT, SAFETY AND HEALTH (NA-ESH)	
PROGRAM ANALYST	1
ASSOCIATE ADMINISTRATOR FOR INFRASTRUCTURE (NA-90)	
PROGRAM ANALYST	1
ASSOCIATE ADMINISTRATOR FOR MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET (NA-MB)	
BUDGET ANALYST	1
COST ACCOUNTANT	1
HUMAN RESOURCES SPECIALIST	1
HUMAN RESOURCES SPECIALIST (EMPLOYEE RELATIONS/PERFORMANCE MGMT)	1
LEARNING MANAGER	1
MANAGEMENT ANALYST	1
PROGRAM ANALYST	1
ASSOCIATE ADMINISTRATOR FOR PARTNERSHIP & ACQUISITION SERVICES (NA-PAS)	
MANAGEMENT ANALYST	1
DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR FOR DEFENSE PROGRAMS (NA-10)	
GENERAL ENGINEER	1
PROGRAM ANALYST	4
LIVERMORE FIELD OFFICE (NA-LL)	
FEDERAL ADMINISTRATIVE SPECIALIST	1
MANAGEMENT SUPPORT SPECIALIST	1
LOS ALAMOS FIELD OFFICE (NA-LA)	
PROGRAM ANALYST	1
NATIONAL NUCLEAR SECURITY ADMINISTRATION (NA-1)	
PROGRAM ANALYST	1
OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS (NA-COMM)	
PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST	2
PANTEX FIELD OFFICE (NA-PFO)	
GENERAL ENGINEER	1
PROGRAM MANAGER	1
SANDIA FIELD OFFICE (NA-SN)	
ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT ASSISTANT	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>27</b>