

## Rep. Ellen Tauscher Leads Bipartisan, Bicameral Group to Insist on Congruent Benefit Package for Law

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 25, 2007

CONTACT: Kevin Lawlor (202) 225-1880

<http://www.tauscher.house.gov/>

Rep. Ellen Tauscher Leads Bipartisan, Bicameral Group to Insist on Congruent Benefit Package for Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory

Wins fight for public comment period

Washington , DC &ndash; Rep. Ellen Tauscher along with her California colleague Senator Diane Feinstein (D) as well

as Senators Jeff Bingaman (D-NM), and Pete Domenici (D-NM) sent a letter to Secretary of Energy Samuel Bodman today stressing that a new benefits package for employees of Lawrence Livermore Laboratory can only be in the best interest of national security, scientific advancement and equity if it is congruent to the package being offered at Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico.

Rep. Tauscher led the bipartisan effort that spans both the House and Senate in her role as Chairman of the House Armed Services Strategic Forces Subcommittee.

The letter states "A key component of the nation's strategy to provide scientific leadership to support the nation's nuclear deterrent is sustaining two competitive design laboratories. Maintaining this vital competitive environment requires equity between these institutions, and success requires a stable workforce throughout the complex and the scientific and technical talent to deliver results to protect our nation."

The letter comes on the heels of a request from Rep. Tauscher and her colleagues last week that the Department of Energy, at the very least, instate a public comment period for employees to voice their thoughts on benefit package. The DOE has agreed and this comment period will move forward.

"The whole point of the competitive lab structure is that competition breeds the best science in order to bolster our national security," said Rep. Tauscher. "If the labs aren't able to recruit and retain the best and brightest minds equally, then the whole concept of competition is lost, the best science isn't being achieved, and our national security is weakened." I will do everything in my power as Chairman of the subcommittee that oversees the labs to ensure the Energy Department gets this right. Anything but a congruent benefit package among the labs is not in the interest of national security, scientific advancement, or the spirit of fairness."

The full text of the letter follows below.

June 25, 2007

Samuel W. Bodman  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Energy  
1000 Independence Ave., SW  
Washington , DC 20585  
Dear Secretary Bodman,

As you know, we are all strong supporters of the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) and promote scientific capabilities in support of its missions. In particular, we support a well-balanced NNSA complex that can attract and retain the talent necessary to fulfill its national security mission and maintain a credible nuclear deterrent.

A key component of the nation's strategy to provide scientific leadership to support the nation's nuclear deterrent is sustaining two competitive design laboratories. Maintaining this vital competitive environment requires equity between these institutions, and success requires a stable workforce throughout the complex and the scientific and technical talent to deliver results to protect our nation. It is therefore critically important that the Department of Energy (DOE) carefully steward the transition of these laboratories to new contractors and enable the contractors to offer equitable benefits packages that support their contract obligations and empower them to deliver the results DOE and Congress expect from these contracts, which means that neither contractor should have a competitive advantage over another in terms of pay and benefits. We are extremely concerned about the impact of the recent contract competitions at the two design laboratories on NNSA's ability to fulfill its national security requirements, because we understand that just such an

imbalance now looms among the different labs.

We recommend that DOE/NNSA accept the LLNS proposed "LANL comparable" pension and benefits plan for LLNL commencing October 1, 2007 to resolve the potential inequities between the two benefits packages. We further recommend that DOE/NNSA conduct a more relevant Ben-Val Study for the DOE labs and comparable FFRDCs to establish an appropriate and consistent market base that accurately accounts for the challenges of recruiting and retaining top quality scientific talent in our current economy. In order to avoid further problems, we urge you to undertake the appropriate Ben-Val revaluation at the same time.

We know that you share our commitment to support the scientific capabilities necessary to fulfill the NNSA's vital missions and look forward to working with you to sustain as workforce that meets our scientific and technical needs today and into the future.

Sincerely,

Rep. Ellen Tauscher

Sen. Diane Feinstein

Sen. Jeff Bingaman

Sen. Pete Domenici.

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