

Congress on the proposed “low-yield” nuclear warhead

House and Senate actions to cancel or limit the Trump Administration’s proposed new nuclear weapon

House actions

FY19 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) in the House Armed Services Committee, May 9

Rep. Adam Smith (D-WA, ranking on HASC) amendment

Would eliminate the authorization for the low-yield warhead.

Lost 28-33 with all Democrats supporting the amendment, all Republicans opposed

FY19 NDAA on the floor of the House, May 23

Reps. Garamendi (D-CA)-Blumenauer (D-OR) [amendment](#)

Would have fenced half the money for the low-yield warhead pending a report to Congress from Secretary of Defense Mattis assessing the program’s impacts on strategic stability and options to reduce the risk of miscalculation

Lost [188-226](#), with five Republicans and all but seven Democrats supporting the amendment.

Actions on the House Energy & Water Development Appropriations Act

Amendment from Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA) adopted during negotiations leading to the Appropriations committee’s markup of the bill to require a report on low-yield warhead:

W76-2 Modification Program.— Not later than 30 days after the enactment of this Act, the NNSA shall provide to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress a report detailing the plan, rationale, costs, and implications of producing a low-yield variant of the W76 warhead. The report shall include the cost and schedule estimates for the engineering phase, and any subsequent phase, of the W76-2 modification program; detailed discussion of the military requirements associated with the W76-2, including Nuclear Weapons Council decisions and U.S. Strategic Command requirements; estimated long-term maintenance costs; impacts on other current or planned warhead programs; impacts on the planned cost and schedule in the event of a time delay in the engineering phase, or any subsequent phase, of the W76-2; and impacts on other current or planned warhead programs in the event of a time delay in the W76-2 modification program.

Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA) [amendment](#) voted during Appropriations committee markup on June 7

Would have moved all money for the low-yield warhead to nonproliferation programs.

Lost [177-241](#) with five Republicans and all but 15 Democrats supporting the amendment.

Senate votes

SASC mark-up of the NDAA, May 21-23, 2018

Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) amendment

Would fence the money for deployment of the W76-2 until Sec. Mattis provided a report on the cost, schedule, and program implications of the development of the program.

Lost 11-16, with Sen. Nelson (D-FL) and Sen. Mckaskill (D-MI) voting with the Republicans

Appropriations Committee mark-up of the Energy & Water Development Approps bill, May 24

Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-OR) amendment

Would move all the money from the low-yield warhead to DOE infrastructure requirements

Lost 12-19 with Shaheen (D-NH), Manchin (D-WV) and Tester (D-MT) voting with the Republicans against the amendment.

Appropriations Committee mark-up of the Defense Appropriations bill, June 28

Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-OR) amendment

Would fence any money for deployment of the low-yield warhead until Secretary Mattis produces a report on the implications of deployment.

The Committee directs the Department of Defense, in consultation with the Secretary of Energy, to submit a report to the committee that details: (1) what Navy equities required to support a low-yield W-76 capability on operationally available submarine-launched ballistic missiles; (2) any changes to or additional crew and personnel training requirements necessary to support any such modifications, a timeline for completing such modifications and changes in order to permit deployment of such warheads as well as a timeline for actually loading and fielding such warheads; (3) rationale for deploying low-yield warhead(s) on a SLBM, each of which is accountable under the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START), instead of taking advantage of Treaty attribution rules that count each U.S. strategic bomber as a single warhead; (4) and a description of actions that will be taken to mitigate risks of miscalculation associated with adversaries being unable to distinguish between a submarine-launched ballistic missile carrying a low-yield warhead and that of a missile carrying several high-yield warheads. The Committee directs that no FY 2019 funding provided by this act shall be used to deploy such W76-2 low-yield nuclear Trident II D5 warheads until examination of the report by the Committee.

Passed by a voice vote in committee, with full support from all Democrats plus, reportedly, Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK)