

March 10, 2020

The Honorable Mike Lee  
Wallace F. Bennett Federal Building  
125 South State, Suite 4225  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84138

The Honorable Mitt Romney  
Wallace F. Bennett Federal Building  
125 South State, Suite 8402  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84138

The Honorable Rob Bishop  
1017 Federal Building  
324 25th St  
Ogden, UT 84401

The Honorable Chris Stewart  
420 East South Temple #390  
Salt Lake City, UT 84111

The Honorable John Curtis  
3549 North University Avenue  
Suite 275  
Provo, UT 84604

The Honorable Ben McAdams  
9067 S. 1300 West  
Suite #101  
West Jordan, UT 84088

**Re: Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons**

Dear Senators Lee and Romney; and Representatives Bishop, Stewart, Curtis, and McAdams:

We write to express our support for the United States to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

We believe nuclear weapons pose an unacceptable threat to people everywhere, and their use, whether deliberate or accidental, would have catastrophic, widespread, and long-term humanitarian and environmental consequences. The residents of Salt Lake County have the right to live their lives and raise their families in a world free from this threat.

Within nine countries, the United States, Russia, United Kingdom, France, China, Israel, India, Pakistan, and North Korea, there are nearly 14,000 nuclear weapons – enough to destroy our planet many times over. Over 90% of nuclear weapons are in the arsenals of the United States and Russia.

The United States has hundreds of deployed nuclear weapons on missiles in underground silos, ready to be launched in minutes. This “hair-trigger” alert status increases the chance that a nuclear war could start due to a false alarm or other error and leads to rushed decision making.

Launch authority in the United States is in the hands of a single person, and a first launch could quickly escalate into a cataclysmic, all-out nuclear exchange.

Nuclear weapons expenditure in the United States in 2019 is estimated to be \$61.45 billion, with Utah taxpayers contributing more than \$512 million; and the United States plans to spend \$1.7 trillion over the next 30 years to replace its entire nuclear arsenal and build new “more usable” nuclear weapons.

The production of new nuclear weapons will threaten our health and the environment by generating dangerous radioactive waste and creating a new generation of “downwinders,” the countless individuals in communities throughout our state and the nation who were exposed to and harmed by radioactive contamination and nuclear fallout from nuclear weapons testing in the 1950s.

The threat of weapons of mass destruction use is contrary to the rules of international law and is in contravention of the Charter of the United Nations regarding threats against other countries, and in violation of numerous United Nations resolutions calling for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, also known as the Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty, is the first legally binding international agreement to comprehensively prohibit nuclear weapons, with the goal of leading towards their total elimination; adopted by 122 United Nations member countries in 2017, the Treaty prohibits participation in any nuclear weapon activities, including the possession, development, manufacturing, testing, use, and threat of use of nuclear weapons.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons has currently been ratified by 33 of the required 50 national governments for the Treaty to go into force and the implementation of and the universal adherence to the Treaty, with full compliance of all parties, is the best way to prevent the catastrophic, grave humanitarian consequences that could be wrought by the spread of nuclear weapons.

The undersigned members of the Salt Lake County Council and Salt Lake County Mayor support the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and call upon the federal government of the United States to join the Treaty.

We urge the Congress of the United States to take appropriate steps to fulfill its ethical obligation to its people and join the global effort to prevent nuclear war by establishing a system of checks and balances ensuring that the President of the United States no longer has the sole and unchecked authority to launch nuclear weapons.

In addition, we urge the United States Congress to renounce the option of using nuclear weapons first, take U.S. nuclear weapons off hair-trigger alert, cancel the plan to replace the nation’s entire nuclear arsenal with next-generation nuclear weapons, and actively pursue a verifiable and multilateral agreement among nuclear-armed states to eliminate nuclear arsenals.

Finally, we formally endorse Back from the Brink: The Call to Prevent Nuclear War, an effort to break the nuclear status quo and build broad support for fundamental change in U.S. nuclear weapons policy and commit to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) Parliamentary Pledge, joining elected officials from around the world in formally supporting the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Respectfully,