

Seaborg had begun over a year earlier to prepare a case for the SNAP program and, as budget battles approached,⁵³ invited private contractors, the military services, and other government agencies to attend seminars about the SNAP program.⁵⁴ In response to the president's request, a draft report on the SNAP program was ready by January 1964. Commissioner Ramey criticized the report's apparent efforts "to lean over backwards to be fair to other types of systems like solar cells" and expressed reservations about the emphasis placed on nuclear safety.⁵⁵

Distributed in February 1964, the report stressed the unique advantages of nuclear auxiliary power to a wide variety of space missions and maintained that the "*performance of ambitious space missions will require amounts of reliable power so large that they can be achieved only from nuclear systems.*"⁵⁶ Welsh, at the Space Council, offered to help defend the program vigorously, but made clear the priorities of the Council regarding the total SNAP program:

My staff recognizes the usefulness of the isotope SNAP devices, but if anything is even more interested in the range of nuclear reactor work entailed in the total program. They feel very strongly that we must give every encouragement now to power development needed to support future missions. The Apollo landing will not be an end. Future possibilities include manned planetary explorations, a growing lunar base, and multi-mission advanced earth orbiting stations. All of these will have to have power sources of...magnitude above any available now. Only nuclear energy has this potential.⁵⁷

Throughout 1964, the AEC and NASA moved toward closer coordination of both agencies' efforts in the space-nuclear field. The move was a response to many forces, including the economic squeeze; the emphasis on non-duplication of effort; the increasing need to justify mission requirements for research and development; and the anticipation of higher power requirements for future missions. In January 1965 a proposed agreement between NASA and the AEC to create a joint Space Nuclear Systems Division circulated for review in those agencies. The agreement stated the purpose and rationale of this reorganization:

Recognizing that the development of nuclear energy systems and their application in space missions requires the technical and management capabilities, and involves the responsibilities, of both the National