

March 12, 2019

Dear Representative,

Our organizations, signed below, have worked for years to advance policies that will address our nation's radioactive waste problems and to substantially improve nuclear waste containment, safety and security. We also share concerns about some so-called nuclear waste "solutions" which would in fact, make the nuclear waste problems worse.

Yucca Mountain, the proposed nuclear waste dump, technically cannot isolate radioactive waste, violates environmental justice, and must be taken off the table as we move forward to face the nation's and the nuclear industry's increasing radioactive waste problems. Consolidated "Interim" Storage is a dangerous distraction from meaningfully addressing this challenge and threatens the whole country while bringing us no closer to being able to permanently isolate the waste. Please see the two brief summaries of the failure of Yucca Mountain and the risks of Consolidated "Interim" Storage attached.

This packet addresses the type of high-level radioactive waste the nuclear industry calls "spent" fuel. A more accurate technical term is "irradiated" fuel because it is millions of times more radioactive than fresh nuclear reactor fuel. Unshielded irradiated fuel emits lethal levels of radiation. Due to the presence of plutonium and other long-lasting radionuclides, it poses a nuclear weapons proliferation hazard; and a health hazard for a million years or more. Measured in mass, this waste is relatively small, but the waste generated by making electricity with nuclear fission is the highest concentration of radioactivity on Earth; enough to pollute every drop of freshwater on Earth, making it unsafe for consumption.

The enclosed briefs provide detail about how current proposals for managing irradiated fuel are ineffective, increase the hazards of nuclear waste, and compromise the nation's ability to successfully manage this environmental problem in the future. Here is an overview:

Terminate the Yucca Mountain proposed nuclear waste site.

We support permanent isolation of the waste from the human environment therefore we oppose the Yucca Mountain repository proposal. It should be terminated now. There are abundant disqualifying conditions and environmental justice violations at Yucca Mountain. Billions of dollars have already been wasted, since this site will not perform to isolate the nation's high level radioactive waste. The application for a federal license to construct a repository at Yucca is under challenge by the State of Nevada, Native Community Action Council, and others. The Department of Energy (DOE) (which applied to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) for the Yucca Mountain final repository license) has declared the site "unworkable" and tried to withdraw the license application. Attached is the troubled history of the site.

Reject Consolidated "Interim" Storage.

We oppose moving radioactive waste to a supposedly "interim" consolidated or centralized location, dubbed Consolidated "Interim" Storage (CIS). Such an unprecedented, massive transportation campaign would unnecessarily move the most dangerous, deadly cargo from dozens of sites across the country on

roads, rails and waterways, over bridges and much infrastructure currently in need of upgrades and repairs. These routes traverse densely populated cities and productive farmland only to be moved again once a permanent location is designated. As long as nuclear power reactors continue to generate new waste, a consolidated storage site is simply one MORE site where this deadly waste would be located.

A vote for consolidated “interim” storage is a vote for moving long-lasting deadly radioactive waste on a shipping campaign through nearly 90% of Congressional districts, for supposedly “interim” storage. The shipping period would take two to four decades of continuous hauling to move the waste, once—only to have to do it a second time, when a permanent storage facility is developed. Conveyance is not a way to increase safety or security.

Interim storage, also called "continued storage" by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, is happening now, at the sites where the waste was and is being generated. Rather than exempting those sites from regulations as is occurring, safety and security of waste and storage systems must be improved.

We urge you not to throw good money after bad. A credible and viable nuclear waste program depends upon termination of the failed Yucca Mountain plan, now. The concept of consolidated “interim” storage is merely a distraction from development of a new scientifically based program to permanently isolate nuclear waste.

We call on you to oppose, and work to stop, any legislation that would promote Consolidated “Interim” Storage and to stop any attempts to revive Yucca through appropriations or any other means. Please contact us for more information and to work together toward these goals. Mistakes made now with irradiated nuclear fuel cannot be undone. We are counting on you.

Sincerely,

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