

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 24, 2012

The Honorable Daniel Inouye  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
S-128, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
S-146a, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hal Rogers  
Chairman  
House Committee on Appropriations  
H-307, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Norman Dicks  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Appropriations  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Inouye, Ranking Member Cochran, Chairman Rogers, and Ranking Member Dicks,

As you prepare your Fiscal Year 2013 Energy, Water, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, I am writing to request that you honor the wishes of the State of Nevada, continue to defund the proposed Yucca Mountain Nuclear Waste Repository, and prioritize funding that seeks alternatives to Yucca Mountain for the long-term storage of our nation's nuclear waste.

As you know, my home state of Nevada is home to Yucca Mountain, and our state has been dealing with this boondoggle project for literally decades. I have consistently opposed making Nevada our nation's nuclear waste dump. While we need to responsibly develop all of our nation's energy resources, including nuclear energy, the irresponsible history of Yucca Mountain undermines the integrity of the project. The Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 charged the Department of Energy (DOE) with finding an appropriate repository site for the disposal of our nation's spent nuclear material. Yucca Mountain was one among many proposed geological sites DOE was charged to investigate based on rigorous guidelines. Unfortunately, the Act was amended in 1987 to concentrate only on Yucca Mountain. With that, Nevada, a state without any nuclear power plants, was legally compelled to bear the burden of permanent story of nation's nuclear waste. This decision in 1987 initiated a one-sided debate, and the study of alternatives effectively ceased.

Nevadans have a right to be safe in their own backyards, and given the historically politicized nature of this project, I don't trust the federal government to appropriately manage Yucca Mountain.

I appreciate the need to address the problem of spent nuclear fuel, but believe it must be solved through careful consideration of all alternatives based on credible scientific information coupled with consent from the host community and state, rather than by politicians in Washington. I am sure you are aware that the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future produced a report in January that suggested this path toward solutions.

It is my hope that Congress can move past Yucca Mountain and embrace better options for long-term storage of spent nuclear fuel. In that vein, I respectfully request that no funds are appropriated in the Fiscal Year 2013 Energy, Water, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill to facilitate a nuclear waste repository at Yucca Mountain.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dean Heller". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "H".

DEAN HELLER  
U.S. Senator