

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 17, 2018

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Energy and Water Development
142 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Energy and Water Development
188 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Alexander and Ranking Member Feinstein:

We write today to reiterate our respective requests that no funds be appropriated to the Department of Energy (DOE) or the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to support licensing activities at the proposed Yucca Mountain nuclear waste repository. As you know, this ill-conceived and fiscally reckless project presents numerous unresolved health and safety concerns, and that is why we have continued to stand with the State of Nevada in its firm opposition to the temporary or permanent storage of nuclear waste in Yucca Mountain. We are pleased that under your leadership, Yucca Mountain has not been funded, and we would respectfully ask you arrive at the same result as you consider DOE and NRC funding for fiscal year (FY) 2019.

While we strongly believe that Yucca Mountain is not the solution to our nation's nuclear waste problem, we recognize the pressing need to address this growing issue and have offered a viable solution: consent-based siting. Consent-based siting is a solution that meets our nation's needs while also ensuring that states have a real voice in this process, and we stand ready to work with you and other members of Congress toward making its implementation a reality. Therefore, as the Subcommittee continues its work on the FY 2019 Energy and Water Appropriations bill, we respectfully request that you include report language indicating support for a consent-based storage solution. Consistent with our approach in S.95, the Nuclear Waste Informed Consent Act, we believe that to be viable, any storage solution, whether interim or long term, must be rooted in consent. We are supportive of your actions to provide for consent-based siting for interim storage, and we believe that expanding this effort to include report language on consent-based siting for permanent storage will both guarantee full and willing partners to host a nuclear waste repository site and responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars.

We commend the Subcommittee's proposal of similar consent-based approval language in past iterations of Energy and Water Appropriations legislation, and we support the Subcommittee in its efforts to retain and expand consent-based approval language in upcoming appropriations bills. We look forward to working with the Subcommittee to ensure consent-based siting becomes the standard for nuclear waste storage. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



DEAN HELLER
U.S. Senator



CATHERINE CORTEZ MASTO
U.S. Senator