

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 16, 2017

The Honorable James Richard "Rick" Perry  
Secretary of Energy  
U.S. Department of Energy  
1000 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington D.C. 20585

The Honorable John Michael "Mick" Mulvaney  
Director  
Office of Management and Budget  
725 17<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W.  
Washington D.C. 20503

Dear Secretary Perry and Director Mulvaney:

We write to express our vehement opposition to the inclusion of \$120 million, in part that would be utilized to restart licensing activities for the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste repository, in the Department of Energy's fiscal year 2018 budget request. As we discussed in your confirmation meetings, it is clear our nation cannot fully move forward with viable sustainable solutions for spent nuclear fuel and defense high-level waste without moving past Yucca Mountain. This request simply perpetuates a decades-long fight that has been ill-advised from the start, done little to solve our nation's waste problem, and wasted billions of U.S. tax payer dollars.

In the budget blueprint released by the White House, the Administration purports that its request aims "to address nuclear waste, enhance national security, and reduce future taxpayer burden," yet in practice, it will do the exact opposite. Governor Sandoval has made clear the State of Nevada will contest over 200 elements of any license application, which would likely take years to resolve and cost federal government over \$1.6 billion. Rather than attempting to force this project on our constituents, it is clear U.S. taxpayers' dollars would be better spent identifying viable alternatives for the long-term storage of nuclear waste in areas that are willing to house it.

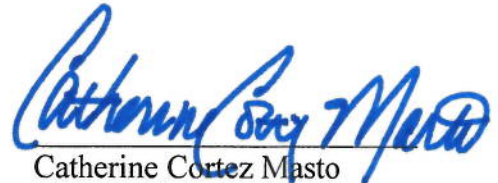
In 2005, the Department of Energy began a consent-based siting initiative to site nuclear waste storage and disposal facilities. This initiative was the result of the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future, a 15 member, bipartisan group tasked with studying waste disposal. This open process ensures all Americans have a meaningful voice in the process if their community is being considered for a future nuclear waste repository. The Trump Administration should focus their efforts on that worthwhile initiative.

We stand with the State of Nevada on their staunch opposition to any attempt to restart the repository licensing process, and strongly urge you to remove the request for resources to do so from the President's budget. Concurrently, we request that the Department devote resources towards DOE's consent-based siting initiative for the storage and disposal of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste. Thank you for your attention to this important request.

Sincerely,

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Dean Heller  
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Catherine Cortez Masto", written over a horizontal line.

Catherine Cortez Masto  
United States Senator