

## **Rep. Rodney Davis Yucca Testimony**

Thank you, Madam Chair, and Members of the Energy and Water Subcommittee for allowing me the opportunity to testify before you today. As you may know, I am here in support of funding levels in the President's Budget request for nuclear waste disposal. This request includes \$116 million for nuclear waste disposal. Specifically \$38.5 million in the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's Nuclear Materials and Waste Safety Program for related activities at Yucca Mountain.

I represent the 13<sup>th</sup> Congressional District of Illinois, which is home to the Clinton Power Station, one of eleven nuclear reactors in Illinois – the most in any state. These reactors generate approximately 53 percent of our states electricity, and 89 percent of the state's emissions free electricity. Roughly 5,900 people are employed as a result. These sites are also home to over 10,000 metric tons of spent nuclear fuel, which is also the most in any state. That is why this issue is important to me.

In 1982, Congress enacted the Nuclear Waste Policy Act (NWPA), which established the Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management within the Department of Energy. This entrusted them with the responsibility of developing a deep

geologic repository for disposing spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste. The Act also included a funding mechanism where ratepayers who received electricity generated by nuclear power paid into a fund for the disposal of spent nuclear fuel.

Over the past 36 years, ratepayers have paid over \$40 billion into this fund. Despite the Act requiring DOE to begin moving spent nuclear fuel by January 31<sup>st</sup>, 1998, it has yet to be moved. DOE's failure to take custody of commercially spent nuclear fuel at the 1998 deadline has resulted in the federal government paying the industry over \$8 billion in damages. Projected future liabilities are estimated at roughly \$30 billion.

In 1987, the Act was amended to restrict DOE's repository studies to Yucca Mountain in Nevada. DOE confirmed the science behind this decision in 1994, and in 2002 Congress and then President George W. Bush approved Yucca Mountain as the nation's designated nuclear repository once again. In 2008 DOE filed their licensing application for Yucca Mountain with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, however the Obama administration later stopped the application process and DOE

closed the site to fulfill a campaign promise to then Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid.

This should not be a partisan issue. If you look at the numerous votes we have taken in the House over the years it is not. In the previous Congress we voted 340-72, to advance the Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act of 2018, which was introduced by my good friend and colleague Congressman John Shimkus of Illinois. If enacted, this legislation would have moved forward with both permanent and interim storage, and fulfilled the promise Congress made to our communities over 30 years ago.

Currently there is over 70,000 metric tons of spent nuclear fuel stored at 121 locations across 39 states. Roughly a quarter of this waste is stored in dry casks, and the rest sits in wet pools, like at Japan's Fukushima site. It sits in Republican districts and Democrat districts. Unless we finally act to restart the project at Yucca Mountain, the issue will remain there indefinitely. I urge you to support the funding levels in the President's budget request for \$116 million for nuclear waste disposal, and \$38.5

million to restart the licensing process with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.