

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 7, 2016

COMMITTEES:
FINANCE
BANKING, HOUSING, AND
URBAN AFFAIRS
COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND
TRANSPORTATION
VETERANS' AFFAIRS
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

The Honorable John Shimkus
Chairman
Energy and Commerce Subcommittee
on Environment and the Economy
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Shimkus:

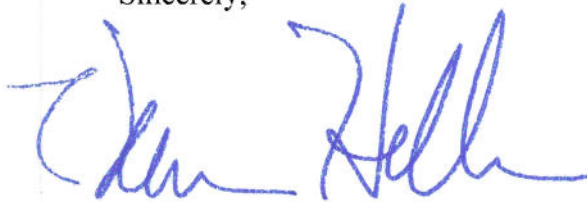
Today, as the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Environment and the Economy holds yet another hearing focused on spent nuclear fuel disposal, I write to reiterate my opposition to the defunct Yucca Mountain Nuclear Waste Repository and urge you to work with me on viable solutions to this important problem plaguing our nation.

While I understand that you disagree with me on the issue of Yucca Mountain, we are in agreement that it is in the best interest of our nation that a program to dispose and store used nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste from civilian nuclear power generation, defense, national security and other activities is implemented as soon as possible. I fully appreciate the importance to Illinois, which is home to more nuclear power plants than any other state in the nation, that progress is made. With that said, that solution is not forcing that burden on Nevada, a state that has never had a nuclear power plant.

Last year, the Department of Energy (DOE) began a consent-based siting initiative to site nuclear waste storage and disposal facilities. Identifying communities willing to host a long-term repository, rather than forcing it upon states that have outright opposed such a site, is the only viable long-term solution to our nation's nuclear waste problem. It is in the best interest of our nation that your subcommittee, and the Congress as a whole, focus on that consent-based process.

Our nation cannot fully move forward with viable sustainable solutions for spent nuclear fuel and defense high-level waste until the Congress moves past Yucca Mountain. I hope you will join me in supporting DOE's consent-based approach so that we can progress towards viable long-term solutions for our nation's spent nuclear fuel.

Sincerely,



Dean Heller
United States Senator