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Office of the Governor

July 7, 2016

The Honorable John Shimkus
Chairman, Subcommittee on Environment
and the Economy
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Paul Tonko
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on
Environment and the Economy
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Shimkus and Ranking Member Tonko:

As your subcommittee meets today to discuss the future of high-level nuclear waste storage in the United States, I write to reiterate the unchanged position of the State of Nevada on the proposed Yucca Mountain Nuclear Waste Repository.

My position, and that of the State of Nevada, remains unchanged from my previous letters to this committee in May 2015, and January 2016: **the State of Nevada opposes the project based on scientific, technical and legal merits.** Furthermore, as set forth in the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982, only the Governor is empowered to consult on matters related to the siting of a nuclear waste repository.

As the committee knows, Nevada is host to two U.S. Air Force bases, a U.S. Naval Base, a U.S. Army Depot, the Nevada Nuclear Security Site (NNSS), and the Nevada Test and Training Range - a total federal land withdrawal roughly the size of the State of Connecticut. Nevada is proud of these contributions to national defense and security.

Furthermore, it is important to remember Nevada has made historical contributions to nuclear energy as the host state for 928 nuclear tests -- 100 of which were conducted above ground. As a result of this testing, the federal government has paid \$1.9 billion over the past 25 years to affected residents of Nevada and individuals from neighboring states who were exposed to dangerous levels of radioactive material.

Nevadans also believe our relationship with the federal government should be one where the state is seen as a valued partner; an ideal that often is not realized. The proposed siting of a national nuclear waste repository in Nevada provides a vivid example of the failure of this partnership when, in 1987, Congress substituted politics for science to amend the Nuclear Waste Policy Act to limit the repository options to one state: Nevada.

As you meet to consider these issues, I would suggest your attention be directed to bipartisan efforts in Congress to pursuing a long-term sustainable solution for the nation's nuclear waste through a consent-based process. If such a process had been embraced by the Congress when my predecessor, Governor Kenny Guinn, vetoed the selection of Yucca Mountain 14 years ago, we might today be closer to a long-term solution for the nation's spent nuclear fuel.

Sincere regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sandoval", written in a cursive style.

BRIAN SANDOVAL
Governor