

**Statement for the Record of Congressman Mark Amodei
Subcommittee on Environment and the Economy
Hearing on “Federal, State, and Local Agreements and Economic Benefits for
Spent Nuclear Fuel Disposal”
July 7, 2016**

Chairman Shimkus, Ranking Member Tonko, and esteemed colleagues of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective on economic benefits for the State of Nevada for accepting the management of nuclear spent fuel and other high-level waste at the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste repository in Nye County, Nevada. When I was elected to Congress in 2011, the Yucca Mountain repository was located in my Congressional district. While Nevada’s Second Congressional District has since changed, I continue to meet with Nevadans from across our great state to learn of their opinions on this important issue. I appreciate the Committee hosting this open dialogue and for allowing Nevada’s Representatives to engage in meaningful discussion as you gather information on Yucca Mountain and consider economic benefits for our state.

First, let me be clear, I do not believe Yucca Mountain should become a single dumping site for the nation’s nuclear waste. But the fact of the matter is that Nevadans cannot simply ignore Yucca Mountain and think it is off the table. As many Americans throughout the nation continue to work to open the facility and bring it online, Nevadans should use this as an opportunity to dictate the terms of the repository under the best conditions for our state. This facility has the potential to not only be a job creator in Nye County, but throughout the state of Nevada, and I appreciate the Committee for engaging and collaborating with our delegation on this important issue.

Second, Nevada can become a worldwide leader in reprocessing spent nuclear fuel so that high-level nuclear waste becomes a commodity instead of trash. In fact, the Nevada System of Higher Education, including the University of Nevada – Reno, and the University of Nevada – Las Vegas, is already conducting research on how to utilize innovative technologies currently available to reprocess spent fuel. Incorporating these two entities with the Desert Research Institute, which is the environmental research arm of the Nevada System of Higher Education, to develop the best technology for commercial reprocessing simply makes sense. Our nation needs a center that includes a nuclear safety best practices center, a training center, and incorporates advancements in technology to better address nuclear spent fuel, all of which these institutions could facilitate.

Other economic benefits could be directed towards Nevada's highway transportation system and infrastructure projects. Specifically, Interstate 11, the proposed Interstate highway partially designated by Congress to eventually connect Mexico to Canada. However, the proposed route from Las Vegas to Reno will likely require a right-of-way designation or public land transfer before constructing that portion. If a transfer is required, the State of Nevada may be interested in pursuing other federal land transfers throughout the State, such as transfers to resolve the public-private jurisdictional management issues of the Bureau of Land Management's 'checkerboard' pattern along Interstate 80. Resolving this jurisdictional lands issue would greatly assist landlocked communities in Northern Nevada where adjacent federal lands are restricting their expansion and growth.

Finally, the western watershed allocation of water resources, coupled with desalinization plants on the California coast, could be revised to provide more water to Nevada, eliminating the need for the Southern Nevada Water Authority pipeline from northern Nevada.

While these are only three brief examples of economic benefits for the State of Nevada, it is clear this project could generate a new form of clean energy for the nation, establish new export industries and create thousands of jobs for Nevadans. Again, thank you for affording me the opportunity to participate in this discussion, and I look forward to working with the Committee as you develop a comprehensive solution to dispose of our country's spent nuclear fuel.