

Testimony Senator Joe Hardy, M.D. 7/7/16

There can be no discussion, deal, or agreement from the State of Nevada on Yucca Mountain spent fuel repository until all safety concerns have been addressed and resolved. We cannot have anyone in Nevada or visitor to Nevada put at risk from either the shipment or storage of spent nuclear waste.

Real people have reasonable and real concerns about the transportation and storage of nuclear waste in Nevada. The hospitality industry is concerned even about the perception of any risk that would decrease visitation to Southern Nevada. People who drive the roads and live in proximity to the roads that would be used have fears of accidents. Farmers could worry about wells in danger of contamination. Politicians do not want to be the one that has to live with the wrong decision that could turn out like a water contamination on a bigger scale than Flint, Michigan.

In so many ways the Yucca Mountain project illustrates that perception is reality. Thus, it behooves us to be sure that the “science” of nuclear storage is unassailable, irrefutable and verifiable. We will have to have every doubt and every question resolved with rational answers not just from the advocates but from the skeptics with facts and figures. Even from those in foreign countries need to be assured that this is a safe place to come, stay and play.

Water is critical for our lives and posterity. We already know that the aquifers under the Nevada Test Site have been contaminated by underground detonations as well as the well documented effects on those downwind from the above ground detonations. People will mistrust a Government report as recently released as May 2016 that uses the word “small” in describing the potential adverse effect on water.

There are definite economic benefits and risks for Nevada with the acceptance of spent fuel storage. People understand that “spent fuel” is not really inert and impotent, inasmuch as we still have to cool in down on site for about a decade before putting it into an unbreakable cask and bury it in the ground far away from civilization. Business, developers, public officials all care about the fragile consumer confidence that drives our economy.

Since Statehood Nevada has been shortchanged. Nevada only received one half the land as it could have had. Nevada leads the Nation in the % of land controlled by the federal government. Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) has not matched the revenue that would be generated had land be in private hands. Nevada remains at or near the bottom of the States getting a percentage of our money back from our taxes sent to Washington, D.C.

I have been impressed that the best laws come about with getting consensus and resolution of concerns from all viewpoints taken seriously into account. Partnerships work better than opposing Parties when momentous changes are made. How can we agree on something? Trust. It would be difficult for Nevada to work with the federal government when things are seen as impositions as opposed to agreed-upon opportunities. How can Congress build trust? Relinquish land control, Build a railroad, participate in road financing, consider local programs such as SNPLA, recognize the BLM land take downs need to take into account contiguous parcels with water run-off realities, facilitate communication corridors for fiberoptics and energy transmission, I-II to LV and on to Reno, making the “Test Site” (we call it that) a place to develop research for reprocessing nuclear waste, using spent fuel as a heat source to generate energy without water like some solar plants using salt, as well as protecting the Grid including

microprocessor technologies, and listening to the locals who know Nevada better than those who live far away.

I realize that political science (count votes) will trump science but we need both to concur and work together. I appreciate what Senator Reid, Gov, Guinn and now Gov Sandoval have done to protect Nevada. We have come to a point where things are changing and the tide is shifting. I can count votes. In 2003 I presented Assembly Joint Resolution 6, originally asking for enough land to build a railroad from the Utah border to the Test Site as well as making a more reasonable PILT to Nevada. The land part was not accepted, as Nevada had the votes to stop the nuclear waste from coming. I now see Nevada in a place to call for all the above mentioned requirements to be met especially Safety for all and a relationship built on trust and respect for the process of working together in this land of the free.

This is only my opinion but I am under the impression that many share it with me.

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