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Congress of the United States
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May 18, 2018

Chairman John Shimkus
House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on the Environment
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Paul Tonko
House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on the Environment
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Shimkus and Ranking Member Tonko,

Thank you for convening a hearing on H.R. 2278, the Responsible Disposal Reauthorization Act. This bill would reauthorize the Department of Energy's (DOE) Cheney disposal cell outside of Grand Junction, CO, through fiscal year 2048. The Cheney cell, which is in Mesa County, Colorado, receives mill tailings waste from mill sites located in state. It accepts approximately 2,700 cubic yards of uranium mill tailings each year, and as the only DOE operated uranium mill tailings disposal site left in the country, it is a critical component of DOE Legacy Management's mission to protect public health and the environment.

Under current law, the DOE Secretary may operate the Cheney disposal cell until 2023 or until the site is filled to capacity. Currently, the remaining capacity in the cell is 234,000 cubic yards, and therefore an extended authorization is required.

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment supports H.R. 2278 and will remain a strong partner in DOE's Legacy Management program.

Following today's hearing, I hope the committee will move quickly to mark-up H.R. 2278, so we can provide more certainty on the future of the Cheney disposal cell to the Department of Energy, State of Colorado, and Mesa County, Colorado. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Scott Tipton
Member of Congress

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