

Testimony for the Record
The Honorable Susie Lee (NV-03)
Subcommittee on Environment and Climate Change: “Cleaning Up Communities:
Ensuring Safe Storage and Disposal of Spent Nuclear Fuel”
June 13, 2019

Thank you, Chairman Tonko and Ranking Member Shimkus, for accepting my testimony for the record.

The safe and sustainable long-term storage of nuclear waste is an issue of critical importance, and I’m pleased that the Committee is taking steps to find a solution that works for the entire country.

It should be clear to all of us by now that the 1987 law mandating Yucca Mountain as the nation’s sole repository for nuclear material is an unworkable and fundamentally flawed piece of legislation. Time and time again, studies have shown that this is not a safe place for the long-term storage of nuclear waste.

For over three decades the state of Nevada has fought the forced importation of toxic material into our state. In the courts, in Congress, and at the ballot box, Nevadans have made it clear that we have no interest in becoming the nation’s dumping ground for nuclear waste.

It is clear that the Nuclear Waste Policy Act Amendments is a flawed piece of legislation, and the implementation has shown that this law must be revised. Congress has the ability to repeal or revise unworkable laws, and the history of trying to implement the NWPAA makes clear that Consent must be the cornerstone of our nuclear waste policy. Without securing a buy-in from the eventual repository’s state, this will only continue to be bogged down by lawsuits and legislative fights.

The delays and costs will only continue and compound so long as Congress refuses to address the fact that Nevadans of all political stripes have consistently opposed any attempt to bring nuclear waste into our state and store it at an unsafe location. At the risk of repeating myself: we don’t make it, we don’t use it, and we’re certainly not going to take this waste.

The past 32 years have shown that without the consent of the state where a permanent repository is located, the process will only continue to suffer additional delays. If my colleagues are serious about finding a long-term solution to store this waste, they will abandon this plan to override the will of Nevadans and begin anew the process of finding a geologically-appropriate site in a state that will accept this waste within their borders.

I agree with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle that we need to find a permanent resting place for toxic nuclear waste. But no state should be compelled to accept this toxic waste from any other state without that state’s consent.

Thank you again for accepting my testimony.