



# United States Senate

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
May 23, 2007

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## DOMENICI, CRAIG RE-INTRODUCE BILL TO FIND A "NU-WAY" ON YUCCA MOUNTAIN

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Pete Domenici, ranking member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, today introduced legislation that will allow the Department of Energy to proceed expeditiously in licensing and developing the Yucca Mountain repository.

Domenici, along with Senator Larry Craig (R-Idaho), and 9 other cosponsors today introduced the Nuclear Waste Access to Yucca Act (NU-WAY). The legislation authorizes DOE to begin moving defense waste to an above-ground storage facility at the repository within the Nevada Test Site upon completion of an Environmental Impact Statement, and civilian spent nuclear fuel following the issuances of a construction permit by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). Moving of spent nuclear fuel will also require a determination that there are no other recycling options available.

In 2002, Congress passed and President Bush signed a law (PL 107-200) which approved the site at Yucca Mountain for the nation's permanent geological repository.

"We cannot have a serious discussion about climate change without including nuclear energy. In order to have a robust nuclear energy program, we must address the waste issue. I recognize that this bill faces long odds given the current makeup of the Senate. Nevertheless, Yucca Mountain remains an essential option to deal with nuclear waste. This legislation will establish a comprehensive program that will provide confidence that our nation's nuclear waste will be managed safely both for current and future reactors," **Domenici** said.

"I commend Senator Domenici for his dedication to bringing about the resurgence of clean nuclear energy in the United States, and I especially agree with his recognition of the key role that opening Yucca Mountain will play in this renaissance. Idaho currently stores more than 300 metric tons of defense related spent nuclear fuel and more than 4,000 metric tons of high level waste. This bill allows for the safe interim storage of this non-recyclable waste at Yucca Mountain. Idaho is proud of the role we played in testing more than 50 prototype power reactors at the Idaho National Laboratory, but we are eager to see the nuclear materials that helped us win the Cold War move from temporary storage to the permanent repository at Yucca Mountain," **Craig** said.

NU-WAY repeals the 70,000 metric ton statutory limit on emplacement of radioactive materials at Yucca Mountain. The bill allows DOE to have access to the nuclear waste fund which contains fees collected from rate payers for waste disposal.

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The legislation also requires DOE to file for an EIS to build a surface storage facility at the Nevada Test Site at the same time it files its construction permit application for a repository on Yucca Mountain. The bill withdraws land for a rail route to Yucca, and modifies the standard contract that a utility must sign with DOE.

Public law 107-200 stipulated the approval of the Yucca Mountain Site, and instructed DOE to file a license application for the repository with the NRC. When the plan was first envisioned in the 1980s, Congress told DOE to enter into contracts with utilities that guaranteed the transfer of nuclear waste by 1998. Courts have since found the U.S. government liable for failing to meet those agreements.

Other original cosponsors of the bill include Senators Richard Burr (R-NC), Mike Crapo (R-Idaho), Lindsey Graham (R-SC), Chuck Hagel (R-Nebraska), Jim DeMint (R-SC) Craig Thomas (R-Wyo.), Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Jim Bunning (R-Ky.) and Mel Martinez (R-Fla.).