

RRR000126

I won't be able to attend a DOE meeting, but I'm faxing my position.

1 { For twenty years now Nevada's senior senator The Honorable Harry Reid has fought tirelessly to end the frenzy to inflict a national horror on Nevada in the form of an insecure repository for the nuclear waste of the entire nation at Yucca Mountain.

In his usual reckless fashion GW Bush seems determined to enact this into law, though every aspect of its existence cries out for this miscreant plan to be scrapped. If Bush succeeds it will add a fitting cornerstone to his worse than useless administration marked by not one piece of valuable legislation or policy.

In order to stuff this down the public's throat the EPA is proposing the least protective public health radiation standard on earth, a standard that is forty times weaker than the public health standard for low level radiation. Why must Americans be exposed to this extraordinary level of risk? Because the most horrible president in US history insists that Yucca be the answer to our nuclear waste disposal needs. Far from being the only answer, it's the worst possible way to go. But far be it from this brain bust president to consider reasonable options.

The Federal Accountability for Nuclear Waste Storage Act of 2007 would store the waste in scientifically endorsed dry casks at the nuclear facility where the fuel was spent, safe there until a permanent solution can be worked out.

Naturally Bush and his cronies prefer a quick fix that solves nothing and promises disaster as surly as statistics verify that mishaps will occur sometime on the 319 mile Caliente corridor through highly populated areas of Nevada- some near the Strip. And when one does, untold thousands of lives will be ruined or lost. The corridor is flood prone and as early as 2005 one caused a train- much like the ones carrying deadly nuclear waste- to be wrecked in a derailment on a bridge and to tumble into the water.

Had it been loaded with radioactive material, America would have its own Chernobyl: one of many to come. Yet in typical Bush harebrained style, he has proposed the Nuclear Fuel Management and Disposal Act. In doing so his chosen at the Department of Energy will hand Congress a bill that'll gut America's public health standards, change longstanding public land use laws, and expedite licensing procedures all in a last ditch rush to open Yucca Mountain as a nuclear waste repository; a truly appropriate testament to the Bush Administration's gross malfeasance and deleterious effect on the country.

Yucca Mountain is 90 miles from Las Vegas, a city considered the ninth most likely target for a terrorist attack. Los Angeles and Phoenix rank higher and could each be devastated by such an attack on Yucca depending on wind direction among other possibilities. The interstate trucks and trains transporting the waste make hijacking or exploding the shipments a lark. I've no doubt Las Vegas will rise many positions on the list should Bush have his way. Then again he's made America a much more dangerous place.

An underlying, unspoken issue lends more heat than light when exposed. I'm certain many believe Harry Reid and I are so adamant about this because we're Nevadans. And you bet; the guys with guns pointed at them will scream the loudest. But an objective look will add a different spin.

What about you, living in Maine for example: Does a radioactive Yucca Mountain bother you? Not like it bothers me, if at all. But what if the nuclear waste from the whole country were transported to and stored 90 miles from your home. Wouldn't tickle you much, I'll bet. So that's the game, deadly musical chairs in which Nevada loses. Except Nevada never entered the game any more than any other state did. Which state would?

Only through the beneficence of the federal government could such a pick have been made: arbitrary, unfair and certainly not uninhabited. So, am I suggesting a more desolate spot in the USA? Not at all!

Law protects our human rights such that one innocent person condemned to death by untold numbers cannot be legally killed. The human rights of the individual override democracy here. Dumping all the nations radioactive waste at Yucca without Nevada's consent poses a similar matter. Nevadans don't want this, and no other state is volunteering.]

2 [The flaw in the idea of one repository for all the waste is not in the "one" place. The problem stems from the extraordinary toxicity, safety concerns, and from acts of terrorism performed on the substances. All these matters would be minimal if the locale were uninhabited.

Even in the most isolated place, there are winds, ground water, and other ways of harming thousands inherent in the idea that there exists one single place in America where a disaster could strike and no one would suffer. No such place exists in our country.

However at the heart of this statement is the very answer we seek. The "one" place should be outside the country; a place that's isolated, uninhabited, suitably stable and accessible by rail or road could serve as a more permanent storehouse. This would be a stroke of luck not only to Americans but also to people around the world living in nuclear energy producing countries.

While we mull this over, dry casks at the site where the spent fuel already resides seems like the most sensible answer. And Nevadans have suffered enough under this recurring unlawful threat. Lets shut down the Yucca Mountain project once and for all. ]

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