

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **For Immediate Release:** | **Contact:**[Megan Taylor](mailto:Megan_Taylor@heller.senate.gov) |
| June 8, 2018 | 202-224-6244 |

**Heller Rebukes U.S. House of Representatives for Passing Appropriations Bill With Funding to Revive Yucca Mountain**

**WASHINGTON –**U.S. Senator Dean Heller (R-NV) today denounced the U.S. House of Representatives for passing its fiscal year 2019 Energy and Water Appropriations bill because it directs $267.7 million to support the nuclear waste repository at Yucca Mountain. Last month, [Heller announced that he successfully worked with the U.S. Senate Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee to exclude funding requested by the Department of Energy (DOE) and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to support and fund licensing activities at the Yucca Mountain nuclear repository](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=26B7A8B3-58BD-4464-B39D-CC588587B3F5).

In April, [Heller strongly urged Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and Ranking Member Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) not to fund the Administration’s budget requests related to Yucca Mountain](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/92c27acf-2dd3-40a5-827c-9c899f508110/Heller%20Letter%20Re%202019%20Yucca%20Approps.pdf). In his [letter](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/92c27acf-2dd3-40a5-827c-9c899f508110/Heller%20Letter%20Re%202019%20Yucca%20Approps.pdf), Heller expressed his strong opposition to the $120 million request in DOE’s budget to revive Yucca Mountain, stating that the failed project has already wasted billions of taxpayer dollars. That same month, Heller expressed his concern to Chairman Alexander and Ranking Member Feinstein about the $48 million request in NRC’s budget for Yucca Mountain, and he encouraged them to instead devote resources to consent-based siting for the storage of nuclear waste. In his letter, Heller cited his correspondence with NRC Chairman Svinicki regarding safety concerns as well as his request for a commitment from the NRC to implement procedural safeguards. The letter is available [HERE](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/3c807d76-e217-4842-832b-1b34d68b4b8f/Heller%20Letter%20Re%202019%20NRC%20Approps.pdf).

“Once again, the U.S. House of Representatives has attempted to revive Yucca Mountain, and once again – I’ll stop them in the U.S. Senate. Not only has the U.S. House of Representatives passed multiple bills that include funding to bring nuclear waste to Nevada, they have also passed legislation that would expedite it,” **said Heller.** “Just as the House has ramped up its efforts to turn Nevada into a nuclear waste dump, I’ve doubled down on my efforts to stop them at every turn. Under my watch in the U.S. Senate, Yucca Mountain is dead. Plain and simple.”

In addition to working with the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee to block funding for Yucca Mountain, [Heller also successfully ensured that the U.S. Senate’s version of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) excluded the $30 million to store defense nuclear waste at Yucca Mountain](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=EBEE6498-492C-4E18-ACED-D32A8E90B8F4https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=EBEE6498-492C-4E18-ACED-D32A8E90B8F4). The U.S. House of Representatives approved its version of the NDAA with $30 million authorized to revive Yucca Mountain on May 24th, 2018.

Also in May, the U.S. House of Representatives approved on a bipartisan vote the Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act, H.R.3053, legislation to jumpstart Yucca Mountain and direct the NRC to decide whether to approve construction of the waste repository within 30 months. Heller reacted by[saying he will stonewall this bill in the U.S. Senate](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=2DDFB874-3493-4B36-A0A6-FA5FAE794442), and he urged a consent-based approach, such as his bipartisan [Nuclear Waste Informed Consent Act](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=0a660176-afb7-427d-a988-62918b702c6a). This legislation permits the construction of a nuclear waste repository only if the Secretary of Energy receives written consent from the governor of the host state, affected local officials, and affected Indian tribes.

**Heller’s previous work to stop Yucca Mountain from being funded**:

* On May 24, 2018, Heller [announced that he worked with the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee to ensure their Energy and Water Appropriations bill excluded funding](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=26B7A8B3-58BD-4464-B39D-CC588587B3F5) requested by the Department of Energy (DOE) and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to fund licensing activities at the Yucca Mountain nuclear repository.
* On May 24, 2018, Heller [ensured that $30 million to revive Yucca Mountain was removed](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=EBEE6498-492C-4E18-ACED-D32A8E90B8F4) from the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee’s National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).
* On May 10, 2018, in a [speech delivered on the U.S. Senate floor](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xPVuUBraAKQ&feature=youtu.be), Heller made it clear to his colleagues that he will block legislation advanced by [the U.S. House of Representatives in a bipartisan vote to approve the Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2018/5/heller-on-bipartisan-house-vote-to-revive-yucca-mountain-this-bill-is-dead-on-arrival), H.R.3053.
* On April 25, 2018, in a [letter submitted to Subcommittee Chairman Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and Ranking Member Dianne Feinstein (D-CA)](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/61a84717-94bb-4a58-8bd9-b33220938991/04242018%20Heller%20Letter%20Re%202019%20NRC%20Approps.pdf), Heller expressed his strong opposition to funding the NRC and [said he remains staunchly opposed](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=CAD35955-75F3-4D06-BBCF-129FF2831987) to any federal efforts to revive Yucca Mountain.
* On April 13, 2018, [Heller urged U.S. Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development Chairman Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and Ranking Member Dianne Feinstein (D-CA)](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/92c27acf-2dd3-40a5-827c-9c899f508110/Heller%20Letter%20Re%202019%20Yucca%20Approps.pdf) not to fund the DOE budget request for $120 million to revive Yucca Mountain.
* On March 21, 2018, [during a U.S. Senate Banking Committee hearing with Office of Management](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aLIy7xCdfFY&feature=youtu.be) and Budget (OMB) Director Mick Mulvaney, U.S. Senator Dean Heller (R-NV[) highlighted the Administration’s reckless and fiscally irresponsible pursuit of Yucca Mountain](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=6098717A-768B-43D4-BE9F-2E467AF68B71), stating that the federal government has already wasted billions of dollars on the project. When asked about alternative solutions to the country’s nuclear waste problem, Director Mulvaney told Heller that he is open-minded to other resolutions and suggested they work together to find one.
* On March 20, 2018, [in a letter submitted to Chairman Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/e7c73b11-9000-4ebb-9382-8426815ce4ea/03202018%20Heller%20Letter%20to%20Murkowski%20Re%20Yucca%20Budget%20Request%20(updated).pdf) Ranking Member Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Heller argued that Yucca Mountain poses numerous health and safety risks to the people of southern Nevada and potentially catastrophic financial risks to the state’s tourism economy. [He urged them not to fund the $120 million to restart the repository licensing process for Yucca Mountain](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=60E8E3B3-90E7-4D35-88F4-F36223C58009).
* On March 20, 2018, Heller discussed DOE’s budget request with Secretary Perry at a U.S. Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation hearing. [Heller noted that the $120 million requested to fund licensing activities at Yucca Mountain was denied last year and that it will be denied again this year](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=6098717A-768B-43D4-BE9F-2E467AF68B71).
* On September 26, 2017, Heller [argued that Yucca Mountain is not the solution to our country’s nuclear waste problem in written testimony submitted to the U.S. House Oversight and Government Reform Subcommittee on the Interior, Energy, and Environment](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=76FF9B6A-5410-4035-BB6B-0D7B300A013F).
* On July 20, 2017, the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee advanced the Senate’s Energy and Water Appropriations bill and [unlike the version that passed the House of Representatives Appropriations Committee, the Senate bill did not include funding for Yucca Mountain](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=691E36A0-8C66-4C9F-B730-01AACAEA879A).
* On July 28, 2017, [the Senate’s Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee advanced a bill that did not include the $120 million requested by the Department of Energy (DOE) to revive Yucca Mountain](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2017/7/key-senate-panel-excludes-yucca-mountain-from-appropriations-bill).
* On June 21, 2017, [Heller submitted testimony to the U.S. Senate Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=6E1CC11F-3413-4DCE-9E13-632E509919A7)expressing his vehement opposition to the Yucca Mountain proposal.
* On June 20, 2017, Heller [reacted to Secretary Perry’s comments at a U.S. Senate Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee hearing](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=BDB21D33-D4F5-4071-9F0B-BEF1E725D3DC), characterizing them as a “blatant disregard for the state of Nevada.”
* On June 6, 2017, Heller [expressed concern after the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources voted to advance Dan Brouillette’s nomination](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=A13C6633-DE62-4EB3-AC3E-05B360E709EA) for the deputy secretary position at the Department of Energy (DOE), the federal agency that has jurisdiction over the licensing activities at Yucca Mountain.
* On May 26, 2017, Heller [reacted to the Government Accountability Office’s (GAO) report detailing the lengthy and costly Yucca Mountain](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=26BB0F72-082D-4F72-90E9-71F5D1268D01) licensing process.
* On May 25, 2017, Heller [spoke on the U.S. Senate floor and reiterated his concern with the President’s 2018 Fiscal Year budget request that included $120 million to restart the licensing activities for Yucca Mountain](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=05305C55-2A3F-4DD6-8C6B-B5A16A72540F).
* On May 18, 2017, [Heller spoke on the U.S. Senate floor to highlight the threat that Yucca Mountain poses not only to Nevada, but the entire country](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=AF7361C6-9C4E-4573-A18C-D63A21893090).
* On May 12, 2017, [Heller spoke on the U.S. Senate floor to highlight Yucca Mountain’s threat to the Las Vegas economy](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/videos?ID=8029B54A-CD1C-48D3-BABE-7200C312E9AC).
* On April 27, 2017, [Heller reaffirmed his staunch opposition to relicensing the Yucca Mountain nuclear repository to Department of Energy Secretary Rick Perry](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=8A6B346E-5B6A-4442-B1F0-3DC17A960C85).
* On April 26, 2017, [Heller testified before a U.S. House of Representatives Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Environment hearing](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/videos?ID=B6E5E92F-B192-4670-8DC8-44B025E09B84) on legislation to revive Yucca Mountain.
* On March 29, 2017, [Heller urged the Administration to drop its Yucca Mountain proposal](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/videos?ID=F00C6518-78A4-475B-9548-0D89EA5370E6), included in its FY2018 budget request.
* On March 16, 2017, [Heller released a statement on the Administration’s FY2018 budget request](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=0133E3F8-7845-46DA-889B-0E8ACC7A094F), which included a proposal to revive Yucca Mountain.

###