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| http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/7/74/US-Senate-UnofficialAltGreatSeal.svg/2000px-US-Senate-UnofficialAltGreatSeal.svg.png   |  |  | | --- | --- | | **For Immediate Release:** | **Contacts:** | | March 16, 2017 | [Heller Press Office](mailto:hellerpressoffice_@heller.senate.gov) 202-224-6244 (Heller)  [Rey Benitez](mailto:Reynaldo_Benitez@cortezmasto.senate.gov) 202-224-3542 (Cortez Masto) | |  |  | |  |  |   **Heller and Cortez Masto: Administration's Yucca Request is Dead on Arrival**  **(Washington, DC)** – Today, U.S. Senators Dean Heller (R-NV) and Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV) sent a letter to Department of Energy Secretary Rick Perry and Office of Management and Budget Director Mick Mulvaney expressing their opposition to a proposal in President Trump’s proposed budget to restart licensing for a nuclear waste repository in Yucca Mountain. The Senators issued the following statements:  “As has been stated in the past, Yucca is dead and this reckless proposal will not revive it. Washington needs to understand what Nevada has been saying for years: we will not be the nation’s nuclear waste dump. This project was ill-conceived from the beginning and has already flushed billions of taxpayer dollars down the drain. Members of both parties keep trying to revive this dead project via the budget and appropriations process, but I will continue to fight those efforts,” **said Senator Dean Heller.**  “Trump’s attempt to revive Yucca Mountain is naïve and would be a colossal waste of taxpayer money. Recent reports estimate that licensing hearings alone would cost more than $1.6 billion dollars. Yucca Mountain is nothing more than a hole in the ground and will never be a viable solution for dealing with nuclear waste. Nevadans know this and they have been clear that they do not want a nuclear dumping site in their back yard. That is why the entire Nevada delegation and I have been and will continue to fight against Yucca Mountain from being resurrected and stop all attempts to revive this reckless project,” **said Senator Catherine Cortez Masto.**  A PDF copy of the letter can be found [here](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/722e8882-702b-4ba6-a19e-9761dd479de8/03162017%20Heller%20Masto%20Letter%20Yucca.pdf).  **Full text of the letter to Secretary Perry and Director Mulvaney:**  The Honorable James Richard “Rick” Perry  Secretary of Energy  U.S. Department of Energy  1000 Independence Avenue, S.W.  Washington D.C. 20585  The Honorable John Michael “Mick” Mulvaney  Director  Office of Management and Budget  725 17th Street, N.W.  Washington D.C. 20503  Dear Secretary Perry and Director Mulvaney:  We write to express our vehement opposition to the inclusion of $120 million, in part that would be utilized to restart licensing activities for the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste repository, in the Department of Energy’s fiscal year 2018 budget request. As we discussed in your confirmation meetings, it is clear our nation cannot fully move forward with viable sustainable solutions for spent nuclear fuel and defense high-level waste without moving past Yucca Mountain. This request simply perpetuates a decades-long fight that has been ill-advised from the start, done little to solve our nation’s waste problem, and wasted billions of U.S. tax payer dollars.  In the budget blueprint released by the White House, the Administration purports that its request aims “to address nuclear waste, enhance national security, and reduce future taxpayer burden,” yet in practice, it will do the exact opposite. Governor Sandoval has made clear the State of Nevada will contest over 200 elements of any license application, which would likely take years to resolve and cost federal government over $1.6 billion. Rather than attempting to force this project on our constituents, it is clear U.S. taxpayers’ dollars would be better spent identifying viable alternatives for the long-term storage of nuclear waste in areas that are willing to house it.  In 2005, the Department of Energy began a consent-based siting initiative to site nuclear waste storage and disposal facilities. This initiative was the result of the Blue Ribbon Commission on America’s Nuclear Future, a 15 member, bipartisan group tasked with studying waste disposal. This open process ensures all Americans have a meaningful voice in the process if their community is being considered for a future nuclear waste repository. The Trump Administration should focus their efforts on that worthwhile initiative.  We stand with the State of Nevada on their staunch opposition to any attempt to restart the repository licensing process, and strongly urge you to remove the request for resources to do so from the President’s budget. Concurrently, we request that the Department devote resources towards DOE’s consent-based siting initiative for the storage and disposal of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste. Thank you for your attention to this important request.  Sincerely,  DEAN HELLER  United States Senator  CATHERINE CORTEZ MASTO  United States Senator  ###  [http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/vendor/_skins/heller/images/newsletter/icon_fb.png](http://www.facebook.com/pages/US-Senator-Dean-Heller/325751330177) [http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/vendor/_skins/heller/images/newsletter/icon_tw.png](http://twitter.com/SenDeanHeller) [http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/vendor/_skins/heller/images/newsletter/icon_yt.png](http://www.youtube.com/user/SenDeanHeller) |