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**OMB Director Tells Heller He is Open to Alternative Proposed Nuclear Waste Storage Sites**

**WASHINGTON** – During a U.S. Senate Banking Committee hearing with Office of Management 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, 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.

Watch the exchange between Heller and Mulvaney [**HERE**](https://youtu.be/aLIy7xCdfFY) or by clicking on the below image.


Click [HERE](https://youtu.be/aLIy7xCdfFY) or the above image to watch the clip. Media has permission to use this footage.

“According to an official DOE cost estimate, in 2008 dollars, close to 15 billion dollars had already been spent on the project before it was suspended, and another 82 billion dollars would be needed to license, construct, and operate the repository through closure, for a total cost of approximately 97 billion dollars,” **said Heller** **to Director Mulvaney**. “Knowing that Yucca has not and will not ever see the light of day, do you think it’s fiscally responsible to continue to seek hundreds of millions of dollars for this unsafe and ill-conceived proposal?”

Director Mulvaney responded by citing what is driving the pursuit of Yucca Mountain: the need to store nuclear waste that is building up in nuclear power plants in his home state and around the country. “If Yucca is not the answer, let’s work together on finding the answer because the temporary fix we have now is fraught with risk,” **said Director Mulvaney.**

Heller then asked if Director Mulvaney if he is familiar with proposals to house a nuclear repository in New Mexico and Texas, states that unlike Nevada, are willing to house it.

“I am open-minded to other resolutions,” **said Mulvaney to Heller**. “I’m not trying to beat up on Nevada, I’m trying to figure out a way to put this stuff some place safe.”

Heller is the author of the [Nuclear Waste Informed Consent Act](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=5D20600D-88C2-4BBE-9E9D-4A23006D0264), which permits the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to authorize construction of a nuclear waste repository only if the Secretary of Energy has secured written consent from the governor of the host state, affected units of local government, and affected Indian tribes. This strategy was wisely recommended by the Blue Ribbon Commission on America’s Nuclear Future, a 15 member, bipartisan group tasked by the federal government to development feasible solutions to nuclear waste disposal.

**Background:**

The Senate Banking Committee hearing today with Mulvaney comes several weeks after the President signed into law the 2018 fiscal year omnibus package, which as a result of Heller’s efforts, did not include the [$150 million 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=526CDC21-D0DB-40ED-AF19-7A3A737E9B98).

Heller has repeatedly expressed Nevada’s strong opposition to the failed Yucca Mountain project to Administration officials as well as his colleagues who are members of the committees of jurisdiction. Even though the U.S. House of Representatives [advanced](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=8EF79DF1-BC92-4F29-88BC-A9FF5CD73120) funding aimed at jumpstarting Yucca Mountain, Heller was able to ensure that the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee [did not include any funding for the project in its Energy and Water Appropriations Bill](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=691E36A0-8C66-4C9F-B730-01AACAEA879A). In March, it was [reported](https://www.politicopro.com/energy/whiteboard/2018/03/simpson-no-go-from-senate-on-yucca-funding-in-omnibus-748331) that the Chairman of the U.S. House of Representatives Energy and Water Development Appropriations Subcommittee signaled that the spending package would not include Yucca Mountain because of objection from the U.S. Senate.

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