

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **For Immediate Release:** | **Contact:**Megan Taylor |
| September 12th, 2018 | 202-224-6244 |

**Once Again, Heller Successfully Stops Funding to Revive Yucca Mountain Project in U.S. Senate-Passed Conference Agreement**

*Senate-Passed Agreement Funds Four Nevada Military Construction Projects, Includes Heller Provisions to Support Nevada’s Veterans, Strengthen Water Security*

**WASHINGTON** – U.S. Senator Dean Heller (R-NV) once again stonewalled efforts in the U.S. House of Representatives to fund the failed Yucca Mountain project after [he successfully worked to keep funding to revive it out of the conference agreement on the Energy and Water, Legislative Branch, and Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations bill](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=F78BF374-12F0-4C31-BEB1-671AEB199C5D), which was passed today by the U.S. Senate. In addition to keeping funding for Yucca Mountain out of the conference agreement, Heller also worked to include provisions that he either authored or co-authored to support Nevada’s veterans and increase accountability at the VA, as well as strengthen Nevada’s water supply and security. The conference agreement also funds four Nevada military construction projects at Creech Air Force Base, Nellis Air Force Base, and the National Guard Readiness Center in North Las Vegas.

While the U.S. House of Representatives approved nearly $268 million in funding for Yucca Mountain, [Heller worked closely with the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee to keep that funding out the U.S. Senate’s version of the spending bill](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2018/6/u-s-senate-passes-heller-measures-to-help-nevada-s-veterans-strengthen-nevada-s-water-security). He later urged U.S. Senate Appropriations Chairman Richard Shelby (R-AL) and U.S. Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development Chairman Lamar Alexander (R-TN) to maintain that position in the [reconciled version of the spending bill, which was released earlier this week](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=F78BF374-12F0-4C31-BEB1-671AEB199C5D). That letter is available [HERE](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/30db6296-34b6-4fa6-b337-89892cdf290c/Heller%20Letter%20to%20Shelby%20and%20Alexander%20Re%20Yucca%20in%20Conference.pdf). Heller also stopped the U.S. House of Representatives efforts to advance funding that would restart the licensing process at Yucca Mountain [last year](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=691E36A0-8C66-4C9F-B730-01AACAEA879A).

"Without my leadership in the U.S. Senate, Yucca Mountain will get the green light. While the U.S. House of Representatives has repeatedly approved funding to revive Yucca Mountain, I have consistently stonewalled their action by working with the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee, the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee, and Senate leadership to make sure that not a single dollar goes toward funding the failed project,” **said Heller.** “Yucca Mountain is not the solution. A state without a single nuclear power plant should not have to shoulder the entire nation’s nuclear waste burden. Instead of pursing a failed project that has already cost taxpayers billions of dollars, the Administration should pursue the only sustainable path forward: a consent-based approach. I will not let Nevada be overrun by states that want to move the nuclear waste they created out of their backyards and into ours.”

In addition to keeping funding for Yucca Mountain out of the final report, the Energy and Water, Legislative Branch, and Military Construction and Veterans Affairs conference agreement includes provisions designed to support Nevada’s veterans and increase accountability at the VA. It also funds four Nevada military construction projects at Creech Air Force Base, Nellis Air Force Base, and the National Guard Readiness Center in North Las Vegas, and it includes a Heller provision to strengthen Nevada’s water supply and security.

A senior member of the U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, Heller has worked to see that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) effectively operates the VA Caregiver Program, which provides a stipend to family members of severely disabled veterans who provide in-home care to the veteran. Heller’s amendment included in the appropriations package would ensure that the VA Caregiver Program has the staffing necessary in Reno, Las Vegas, and across the country to provide the attention and support these veterans and their caregivers deserve. Earlier this year, Heller and U.S. Senator Bob Casey (D-PA) contacted Acting VA Secretary Robert Wilkie urging a retrospective review of the eligibility determinations of caregivers who were discharged from the program. The letter is available [HERE](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/af1aa13b-a47e-49dd-933f-dd150b411bc7/VA%20Caregivers%20Letter%202018.pdf). The Senate-passed conference agreement also includes an amendment that Heller filed with U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs Ranking Member Senator Jon Tester (D-MT) to prohibit the VA from transferring any funds out of the VA’s homeless veteran programs. Heller has repeatedly fought back against the VA’s repurposing of funds from VA programs designed to assist homeless veterans. In a December 2017 letter to former VA Secretary David Shulkin, Heller doubled down on his opposition and urged Shulkin to stop the VA’s proposal to redirect funding intended to help the homeless veteran population. The letter is available [HERE](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/6cb8c450-7039-4361-8fff-dd6d1c15cf3d/December%20Letter%20to%20Secretary%20Schulkin.pdf). In April of 2018, he requested that the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies provide robust funding to the Supporting Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Program, the Grant and Per Diem (GDP) Program, and case management and supportive services as administered by the VA because these programs are central to federal efforts to end veteran homelessness. The letter is available [HERE](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/223426c2-9306-498a-9b0c-831931dcc813/Approps%20Letter%202018.pdf).

“I was proud to see the U.S. Senate pass my provisions to support Nevada’s veterans and protect Nevada’s water security. It is a great privilege to be a voice for Nevada’s veterans as a senior member of the Veterans’ Affairs Committee, which is why I worked to ensure that my provisions provide additional transparency to programs that our veterans rely on. I am also glad to see authorization of military construction projects at Creech and Nellis Air Force Bases, as well as the National Guard Readiness Center in North Las Vegas,” **said Heller.** “Furthermore, the reauthorization of the conservation project of the Colorado River System is fundamental to our water supply in southern Nevada and will go a long way toward protecting the Colorado River Basin.”

The conference agreement also included Heller’s provision that is based on [legislation he previously introduced to improve southern Nevada’s water supply and security by reauthorizing the Colorado River System Conservation Pilot Program (CRSCPP)](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2018/3/heller-introduces-bill-to-increase-nevada-s-water-supply). The CRSCPP has conserved nearly 143,000-acre feet of water since its inception, and the Heller provision that passed today will reauthorize the program for four years. The southern Nevada region receives nearly 90 percent of its water supply from the Colorado River, which serves over 2 million Clark County residents and over 42 million visitors per year.

**Additional Background on Heller’s work to stop Yucca Mountain**:

* On July 6, 2018, [Heller contacted U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman John McCain (R-AZ) about maintaining the position of not authorizing funding for Yucca Mountain in the final conference report for the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/b837388d-a75b-4334-8cdd-59434e0ac769/Heller%20Letter%20Re%202019%20NDAA%20Conference%20Report.pdf)
* On July 2, 2018, Heller [wrote U.S. Senate Appropriations Chairman Richard Shelby (R-AL) and U.S. Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development Chairman Lamar Alexander (R-TN) thanking them for not funding Yucca Mountain in the minibus and urging them not to fund any activities related to Yucca Mountain in the conference report](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/30db6296-34b6-4fa6-b337-89892cdf290c/Heller%20Letter%20to%20Shelby%20and%20Alexander%20Re%20Yucca%20in%20Conference.pdf).
* On April 13, 2018, Heller contacted U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman John McCain (R-AZ) and [urged him to exclude any language that authorizes funding for Yucca Mountain from the National Defense Authorization Act](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/d09bdc40-7457-44a1-9828-179b360443a6/04132018%20Heller%20Letter%20Re%202019%20NDAA.pdf).
* 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) [not to fund the DOE budget request for $120 million to revive Yucca Mountain](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/92c27acf-2dd3-40a5-827c-9c899f508110/Heller%20Letter%20Re%202019%20Yucca%20Approps.pdf).
* On April 24, 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 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, 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](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/e7c73b11-9000-4ebb-9382-8426815ce4ea/03202018%20Heller%20Letter%20to%20Murkowski%20Re%20Yucca%20Budget%20Request%20%28updated%29.pdf)submitted to Chairman Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and 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.

###

