

**For Immediate Release:** Contact: Chandler Smith

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**Heller Seeks More Answers from DOE Secretary Moniz about Nuclear Waste Shipments to NV**

*Moniz’s responses to Heller at July 30th ENR under scrutiny; Heller demands more answers*

**(Washington, D.C.) –** Today, U.S. Senator Dean Heller (R-NV) wrote to Department of Energy (DOE) Secretary Ernest Moniz regarding the Department’s intentions to transport nuclear waste from out-of-state to the Nevada National Security Site (NNSS).

Last week, [Heller questioned Secretary Moniz](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d2M4RoVzIA0&feature=c4-overview&list=UUTS6f940sIirkO6ICyx4ksw) at a hearing considering the Nuclear Waste Administration Act of 2013. Since then, news reports have revealed inconsistencies in Moniz’s testimony. In the letter, Heller asks for clarification regarding those discrepancies, as well as additional information about DOE’s transportation plans.

 A PDF of the letter is attached to this press release.

**Full text of the letter below**:

August 6, 2013

Secretary Ernest Moniz

Department of Energy

Washington, DC

Dear Sec. Moniz,

I appreciated the exchange we were able to have last week during the July 30, 2013 Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee hearing on the Nuclear Waste Administration Act, particularly as it related to our discussion regarding the Department of Energy’s (DOE) proposal to bring waste from Oak Ridge, Tennessee to Nevada.  I am grateful for your commitment to work with me and Governor Sandoval regarding these proposed shipments, and I am writing in that spirit of collaboration and transparency.

As you are well aware, the subject of importing any type of nuclear waste to Nevada is a sensitive subject.   In 1987, with the stroke of a pen, Nevada was legally designated as the nation’s nuclear waste dump.  This political decision was wrong then, and is still wrong today.  I have expressed to you before my appreciation of your commitment to consent-based siting for spent nuclear materials.  As you know, Yucca Mountain is not the only place the government is determined to bury waste in Nevada, and I believe consent for this activity is just as important.

I have made it clear that I am concerned about the DOE’s plan to bring hazardous nuclear waste from out-of-state to the Nevada National Security Site.  In light of discussions I have had since the hearing, and additional information that has come to light, there are several things I would like to follow-up with you on regarding our discussion at the hearing.

1. During your testimony last week, you seemed to indicate that DOE believed the State of Nevada had signed-off on the proposed shipments to the NNSS.  If this is your department's belief, I would appreciate clarification from you on how this conclusion was reached, especially in light of the persistent issues regarding potential transportation of hazardous nuclear materials?
2. Nevadan’s have a right to be safe in their communities and on the roads, and I am not convinced DOE has a plan to import waste to Nevada that meets this basic threshold. In the past, Nevada Governors and DOE have worked together to avoid shipping radioactive waste through Las Vegas to the NNSS.  Will you commit to continue this practice?
3. In the hearing, I mentioned the importance of partnership between the State and DOE.  This partnership must also include impacted local governments and Native American Tribes.  What is DOE doing to increase transparency and partner with Cities, Counties, and Tribes in Nevada?
4. You mentioned in your testimony that you and the Governor discussed creating a working group to deal with the issues and opportunities associated with NNSS waste management decisions.  When do you plan to create this working group, and when will meetings commence?
5. The State has concerns about the lack of analysis regarding the environmental impacts of increased waste disposal activity in light of the new Waste Acceptance Criteria at the NNSS.  Do you believe DOE has conducted sufficient analysis?
6. I appreciate your desire to be a wise steward of taxpayer dollars as it relates to waste storage. In light of this, and given DOE’s reclassification of waste through the Waste Acceptance Criteria, is it possible that the waste proposed to be transported to NNSS would be more suited to short-term interim storage and eventual geologic storage?

Your timely response would be greatly appreciated.  Thank you again for your willingness to work on the many issues of importance to the State of Nevada and DOE.  I look forward to hearing from you.

                                                                        Sincerely,

                                                                        DEAN HELLER

                                                                        U.S. Senator

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