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| **For Immediate Release:** | **Contact:**Megan Taylor |
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**Heller Ensures $30 Million to Revive Yucca Mountain is Removed from Senate’s Bill to Authorize Funding for the Defense Department**

**WASHINGTON**– Following the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee’s approval of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), U.S. Senator Dean Heller (R-NV) today announced that he successfully ensured that the U.S. Senate’s version of the NDAA excluded the $30 million to store defense nuclear waste at Yucca Mountain, that was included in the defense funding bill that the U.S. House of Representatives approved this morning. Earlier this year, [Heller urged U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman John McCain (R-AZ)](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/d09bdc40-7457-44a1-9828-179b360443a6/04132018%20Heller%20Letter%20Re%202019%20NDAA.pdf) to honor the will of the U.S. Senate appropriators and exclude any language that authorizes funding for Yucca Mountain in the NDAA. Heller’s letter to Chairman McCain can be found [HERE](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/d09bdc40-7457-44a1-9828-179b360443a6/04132018%20Heller%20Letter%20Re%202019%20NDAA.pdf).

Heller also worked with the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee to make sure that the U.S. Senate Energy and Water Appropriations bill, [which was finalized today,](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2018/5/heller-announces-he-worked-with-key-senate-panel-to-exclude-yucca-mountain-from-funding-bill) did not include any funding for Yucca Mountain. In an April letter to U.S. Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development Chairman Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and Ranking Member Diane Feinstein (D-CA), Heller expressed his strong opposition to the $120 million request in DOE’s budget to revive the project, 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, I’ve been able to successfully block the U.S. House of Representatives’ efforts to revive Yucca Mountain,” **said Heller.** “While the U.S. House of Representatives approved a defense authorization bill that included $30 million for defense nuclear waste to be stored at Yucca Mountain, I worked with the chairmen of the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee and the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee to make sure that not a single dollar was authorized for activities at Yucca Mountain in the Senate’s version of the bill. With my leadership in the U.S. Senate, the House’s repeated attempts to breathe life into the ill-conceived Yucca Mountain project amount to nothing more than a failed exercise – and I’ll continue to make sure of it.”

Last year, the House of Representatives [advanced](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=8EF79DF1-BC92-4F29-88BC-A9FF5CD73120) funding to resume the licensing process for Yucca Mountain. However, [just as he did this year](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2018/5/heller-announces-he-worked-with-key-senate-panel-to-exclude-yucca-mountain-from-funding-bill), Heller was able to successfully ensure that the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee’s Energy and Water Appropriations bill [did not include any funding for the project](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=691E36A0-8C66-4C9F-B730-01AACAEA879A). Most recently, 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 [this bill is dead on arrival in the U.S. Senate](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=2DDFB874-3493-4B36-A0A6-FA5FAE794442) and 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 April 13, 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, [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 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](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](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.

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