



# US NUCLEAR ENERGY FOUNDATION

**“Nuclear Advocacy through Grassroots Education”**

A Non-Profit 501(C)(3) Nevada Foundation

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Our response to this story are our op-ed points we would make in this article which are educational to our Nevada citizens. The mission of our foundation is “grassroots education about nuclear technology. We would encourage all to expand on the dialogue because the Yucca Mountain program is a complex science engineering and safety long term facility. It is a worldwide topic which needs to be addressed by apolitical participants.

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## Nevada, keep up the fight against nuclear waste: RGJ Editorial Board

RGJ Editorial Board March 1, 2018



(Photo: Getty Images/iStockphoto)

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After a seven-year respite, it appears that the federal government wants to take another crack at opening the Yucca Mountain Nuclear Waste Repository in southern Nevada, a project that state leaders have opposed since it was first pitched in the early 1980s. **It is seldom mentioned that the Yucca “selection” was voted on and approved by the U.S. Congress and the Senate on two occasions. (by elected officials representing the entire country. The Congressional law was passed in 1982 and updated in 1985 and remains the law. The legal political process to reject the Yucca law is to request Congress to reverse the law. The reference to a seven-year respite is a result of “political maneuvering” by defunding completion of the Application**

**Review Process, rather than going to Congress and legally reversing the law or educating the public. Aside from the State of Nevada, as American citizens, we all should be concerned about “political maneuvering” opposed to the public voice as political maneuvering affects far too much public policy.**

**The grassroots public have a right to know the truth!**

The RGJ Editorial Board urges its state leaders and congressional representatives to keep the fight going — because once again, Nevada is being kept on the sidelines of the discussion. **The legally commissioned Yucca Application Review Process is a science and engineering technical study made during construction of the original tunnel. The political opposition is based on “opinion” rather than the science which supports the study. A transparent position would support the “completion” of the actual study, not oppose it based on emotional opinion. With everyone’s concern over this major national program, full transparency could only have been measured by a public referendum, for which the State has declined. The grassroots public have a right to know the truth!**

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In 2011, federal funding for the site was cut off by the Obama administration. The government at the time noted that shutting down work at Yucca was a political decision and not based on safety concerns. (Of course, this is the same federal government that assured 20th-century Nevada that nuclear testing posed no health problems.) But the Department of Energy and Nuclear Regulatory Commission has blindsided the state by asking for \$150 million this year to pursue licensing for the shuttered facility. **The funding request is for the completion of the Application Review Process, in order to establish confirmation of the science and engineering study to prove its safety and long-term stability to sustain the repository per EPA requirements. The truth is that the Yucca study was blindsided by a “political decision” and not an apolitical science analysis to complete the application. The grassroots public have a right to know the truth!**

At first glance, Nevada looks to be outnumbered in this fight. Spent fuel has been piling up for decades at 61 nuclear power plants around the country, and about one in three Americans live within 50 miles of a nuclear plant, according to 2010 census data.

### **There polling questions: Should Nevada, keep up the fight against nuclear waste?**

#### **Thank you for voting!**

Yes, Nevada is <b>not a wasteland</b> . . . . .	<b>44.84%</b>
Nuclear waste <b>storage and reprocessing would be great for Nevada's economy</b> . . . . .	<b>26.91%</b>
We should consider it, but only <b>if there's a much better deal on the table</b> . . . . .	<b>17.94%</b>
For the sake of <b>national security, we should accept</b> nuclear waste in Nevada. . . . .	<b>6.73%</b>
Other: . . . . .	<b>3.58%</b>
<b>Rounding off these numbers, we establish: . . . . .</b>	<b>99%</b>

So, we consider 45% opposed. Then, 27% for storage & reprocessing, 18% for a better “deal” and 7% for national security safety, the approvals total **51%**. The grassroots public have a right to know the truth!

But Nevada has kept up the fight for decades with a united front of Republicans, Democrats, business interests and environmental activists. We likely can continue to cost the federal government more time and billions without coming any closer to storing an ounce of spent fuel in the Silver State. And somehow, the federal government still doesn't see Nevada as an equal partner for negotiation, but rather a bullying victim to be strong-armed. **By choice, Nevada chose to be an opposing partner rather than an equal partner. The DOE provided Nevada with some \$97 million dollars over the years for the purpose of “parallel studying” the science data. Nevada chose to spend the funds to seek ill-founded opposition research.**

If we ever get invited to the adult table, we Nevadans need to be educated on the science and risks of storing and reprocessing spent nuclear fuel here, rather than relying on the same rote “no” to which we've been accustomed for decades. An online poll conducted by the RGJ last month, though highly unscientific, showed a plurality of respondents still eager to prevent Yucca from being certified, but other respondents thought a case could be made for the repository. Some wanted to know more about the direct economic impact for the state from storing and reprocessing spent nuclear fuel. Others wanted billions (or even trillions) of dollars from the feds to fund education, transportation and health care for Nevadans. **It's GREAT that the RGJ identifies the need to educate the Nevada public. Education is the single biggest mission that DOE and the government has failed with the Yucca Mountain dialogue. This has been our mission and we normally succeed, but, there are always people who will not accept facts over emotion. IF” the RGJ REALLY wants an invite to the adult table, “we Nevadan’s” might consider much more research. The “education” on the science . . . risks . . . storing . . . and reprocessing are documented in the Yucca Application Review Process study. Nevada’s opposition to the study completion makes no sense. In respect to a potential . . . case made for building the repository. Nevada has never offered a proposal to the DOE. “Others wanted billions . . . from the feds”. When considering negotiation, it is only fair that those participants engage in amicable discussion. “Wanting” billions from the feds is nothing short of bribery, and the “feds” are not a third party entity, but, the American taxpayer. As equal American citizens, Nevada has no right to request a “windfall” of funding from our fellow taxpayers for something that should be considered a “public service”. The 77,000 tons of spent fuel does offer trillions of dollars with a well-conceived economic proposal, but, it should be based on a sound “business model” and not windfall economics for Nevada.**

At this point, though, we're just writing wish lists; we're not hearing these proposals from the other side of a negotiating table. But again, we're not viewed as a party to the discussion. We have no offers — and we shouldn't be the ones to start proposing any. Despite the billions of dollars sunk into the project, the federal government hasn't even attempted to sweeten the deal. It appears that after three-plus decades, nuclear-powered states and the federal government still view Nevada as the place to sweep nuclear waste under the rug. **The DOE and BLM own the land, the commission of the site selection is Congressional law. If Nevada wants a seat, bring the seat with them, a full support position of the**

facility, and “ask” what the assets of the Yucca build and future reprocessing potential might be? Before coming to the table Nevada has to research the implications of a \$97-billion-dollar public works project and how the state might possibly support the science and engineering workforce and or support services? It would be great to see the RGJ outline a survey of these types of questions for the public and our representatives. This would demonstrate a viable willingness to actually negotiate.

The RGJ Editorial Board recommends that state leaders keep up the fight to be included in the conversation, and not to be coerced into taking responsibility for other states' energy choices. Nevada is not America's wasteland, nor is it America's weak sibling. **America has no wasteland, it has some challenging, difficult habitation environments in need of energy and water, (which might best be solved with nuclear desalination plants). Future nuclear technology could turn the Nevada desert into crop land. With all of the reference to waste, dump, etc. the definition of repository is a noun, a receptacle or place where things are deposited, stored, or offered for sale: an abundant source or supply; storehouse. There is no doubt that the future will provide a tremendous asset in reprocessing which has a documented value of \$14-trillion-dollars.**

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It is perplexing that most news articles in Nevada talk about the “opinions of politicians”. **A welcome change in this story** does apply some question to public education about the science and engineering behind Yucca Mountain.

We would offer our participation to the RGJ Editorial Board to cooperatively participate in educating the public and stakeholders about the science and engineering at Yucca Mountain and a viable background and future of nuclear reprocessing.

“What if” we could develop an in-depth, complete exposé on Yucca Mountain science supporting a valid educational discussion with our grassroots citizens? Maybe the RGJ would consider, the Pulitzer Prize organization, they list 14 prizes in journalism, on their website, #5 is for a distinguished example of reporting on significant issues of local concern, demonstrating originality and community expertise, using any available journalistic tool, Fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000). There is no doubt that the Yucca debate is a significant local issue of concern, and carries national public interest. It is not inconceivable that a team could develop an exposé on this topic that has been a political football for the entire country and may well qualify for a Pulitzer submission.

The US Nuclear Energy Foundation has a decade of research on the science and politics behind the Yucca Mountain program. To re-state our foundations primary mission, “Nuclear Advocacy Through Grassroots Education”.