

Here's How Trump Could Save The US Nuclear Industry



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President-elect Donald Trump could turn around America's struggling nuclear industry by approving a federal nuclear-waste repository at Yucca Mountain in Nevada, according to the Wall Street Journal.

Political opposition from Nevada Democratic Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid and President Barack Obama prevented the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste site from opening, leaving nuclear

plants without a good place to store spent fuel.

"[W]e hope the Trump Administration takes another look at the nuclear-waste repository at Yucca Mountain in Nevada," the Wall Street Journal editorial board wrote Monday (<http://www.wsj.com/articles/harry-reid-and-the-horse-he-rode-in-on-1479081783>). "In an under-reported political bargain, Mr. Reid promised Mr. Obama that he would do the President's dirty work on Capitol Hill if the President blocked the Yucca project. Mr. Obama named Reid aide Gregory Jaczko as chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission in 2009, and a year later Mr. Jaczko shut it down."

Reid repeatedly blocked funding to complete Yucca Mountain's licensing process, leaving American nuclear plants without a good place to store spent fuel. Such opposition created legal liabilities (<http://www.wsj.com/articles/harry-reids-nuclear-taxpayer-waste-1428362176>) for the federal government that could exceed \$50 billion.

The Department of Energy submitted its proposal (<http://www.nrc.gov/waste/hlw-disposal/yucca-lic-app.html>) to build Yucca Mountain in June of 2008 and the project met the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC) safety standards (<http://www.winston.com/en/energy-industry-watch/yucca-mountain-holy-grail-still-not-dead.html>) in October of 2014. The NRC released a report in May (<http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/nuregs/staff/sr2184/>) determining the site would have no adverse environmental impact on the local groundwater, soil, ecology or public health for a period of 1 million years.

"Mr. Trump owes no political debt to Nevada, which due to Mr. Reid's efforts voted last week for Hillary Clinton and defeated the GOP's Senate candidate," the editorial board continued. "Reviving Yucca would be a sign the Senate is moving past Mr. Reid's era of dishonest political manipulation and partisan rancor."

As a result of the federal government's failure to complete Yucca, other countries are going into the waste disposal business.

Australia is considering building a large multi-national nuclear waste storage facility which would offer \$262 billion in economic benefits (<http://dailycaller.com/2016/05/09/australia-expects-to-make-262-billion-with-solution-to-nuclear-waste/>) to southern Australia and would be much more efficient than smaller national waste storage facilities. The facility could generate \$73.5 billion in economic benefits for the region over the next 120 years (<http://townhall.com/news/politics-elections/2016/05/09/australian-inquiry-backs-nuclear-power-after-decadeslong-aversion-n2160180>) while generating \$188 billion in revenue for the government, mostly from other countries paying to dispose of their nuclear waste. Adding these economic benefits shows that building the facility will make Australia \$262 billion, which is far more than the proposed costs of about \$106 billion.

The advantages of nuclear power have caused large majorities of scientists, engineers and economists to support nuclear power (<http://www.pewinternet.org/interactives/public-scientists-opinion-gap/>). Opinion polls show the more people know about nuclear power, the more likely they are to support it.