

**Testimony of Senator Jacky Rosen on Opposition to the
Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act of 2019
Committee on Environment and Public Works Hearing:
May 1, 2019**

Chairman Barrasso, Ranking Member Carper, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify at today's hearing. Once again, I am here to make one thing clear: Nevadans wholeheartedly oppose becoming the nation's dumping ground for nuclear waste.

For over 30 years, the state of Nevada and local communities have rejected the misguided Yucca Mountain project on safety, public health, national security, and environmental grounds. In fact, the state has filed over 200 contentions against the Department of Energy's (DOE) license application, challenging the adequacy of DOE's environmental impact assessments. Nevada's full bipartisan delegation opposes this bill, as do the previous Republican Governor Brian Sandoval and the current Democratic Governor Steve Sisolak. I would like to submit Governor's Sisolak letter in opposition to the Yucca Mountain project for the record.

As we have known for decades, numerous scientific studies have deemed Yucca Mountain unsafe, based on the fact that the site is seismically active and sits above an aquifer.

Moreover, under this particular legislation, designating Yucca Mountain as the nation's dumping ground would require transporting over 110,000 metric tons of radioactive waste – this number is 40,000 metric tons *more* than what was outlined in the original Nuclear Waste Policy Act -- and much of it would travel by rail and road through the heart of Las Vegas and dozens of other major cities across the country.

Let's put this in perspective: we are talking about shipping roughly 1 to 3 trains or 1 to 2 truck shipments across the country per week, every week for 50 years, from 76 shipping sites. That nuclear waste would be transported weekly through a total of 44 states including many represented on this committee today: Wyoming, Oklahoma, West Virginia, Indiana, Iowa, Idaho and many other states. It is hard to imagine that shipping over 5,000 truck casks of high-level nuclear waste over a span of 50 years, won't result in at least one radiological release somewhere in this country.

Severe transportation accidents involving these shipments threaten the health and safety of tourists and individuals who live along proposed transportation routes, and would cause billions of dollars in cleanup costs and related economic losses. I ask the Members who are listening to our testimonies today: is this a risk you are willing to take?

In addition, Yucca Mountain represents a serious challenge for our national security.

The Yucca Mountain site is adjacent to the Nevada Test and Training Range (NTTR), the "Crown Jewel" of the Air Force. This Air Force training site provides the largest air and ground military training space in the contiguous United States without interference from commercial aircraft. It is also home to 75 percent of stateside Air Force live munitions.

Military leaders have said the Yucca Mountain project could directly impact our country's ability to defend itself. There are no nuclear waste transportation routes across the training site that would not impact their training exercises. Does it really makes sense to transport and store our nation's nuclear waste right next to a military bombing range?

Not only is this bill bad for the safety of millions of Americans and our national security, this bill also proposes a radical change in the nation's approach to nuclear waste management. The original Nuclear Waste Policy Act from the 1980s calls for two repositories, to ensure regional equity and address technical redundancy. This bill does away with that by eliminating the current requirement for progress on a second repository - placing the entire burden on Nevada, which does not even produce nuclear waste.

Finally, once again, this bill further takes away Nevada's voice by moving forward with the Yucca Mountain project without a consent-based process. Nevada does NOT want – nor has EVER wanted – to store nuclear waste at Yucca Mountain. This bill is taking us away from our founding principle of state-self-determination and liberty and sending us to a place where all states are not equal under this law.

As Senators, we are sent here to represent the voice of our constituents. I don't think any Senator would think it is okay for other Senators to take away the voice of their state. Nevada needs a voice in this process. PERIOD. This is nothing more than an attempt to take Nevada's state rights away.

With all due respect, this committee's legislation ignores the environmental, safety, and security concerns of Nevadans who would be forced to store nuclear waste that they had no role in creating. I therefore urge the Committee to stop wasting billions of taxpayer dollars by resurrecting a project that's been dead for over 30 years, and instead identify viable alternatives for the long-term repository in areas that are proven safe and whose communities consent to storage.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify today.