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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 7—SENATOR OHRENSCHALL

PREFILED FEBRUARY 3, 2025

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Referred to Committee on Legislative Operations and Elections

SUMMARY—Urges the Federal Government to recognize the unsuitability of Yucca Mountain as the site for a repository to store and dispose of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste. (BDR R-945)

FISCAL NOTE: Effect on Local Government: No.  
Effect on the State: No.

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EXPLANATION – Matter in *bolded italics* is new; matter between brackets ~~omitted material~~ is material to be omitted.

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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION—Urging the Federal Government to recognize the unsuitability of Yucca Mountain as the site for a repository to store and dispose of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste.

1 WHEREAS, Since 1954, when the Atomic Energy Act was  
2 passed by Congress, the Federal Government has been responsible  
3 for the disposal of radioactive waste, yet few environmental  
4 challenges have proven more daunting than the problems posed by  
5 the disposal of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste;  
6 and

7 WHEREAS, In July 2002, despite seemingly inadequate standards  
8 set by the Environmental Protection Agency and on the  
9 recommendation of the Secretary of Energy, President Bush signed  
10 legislation designating Yucca Mountain as a suitable site for the  
11 nation’s only repository for spent nuclear fuel and high-level  
12 radioactive waste without regard to the constant and vigorous  
13 objections of the political leaders and residents of the State of  
14 Nevada, and ignoring the underlying geologic isolation  
15 requirements set by Congress; and

16 WHEREAS, The recommendation of Yucca Mountain was not  
17 only premature but also flawed, especially given the Department of  
18 Energy’s failure to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the  
19 socioeconomic, environmental and public health and safety impacts,



1 both within Nevada and within communities along national shipping  
2 routes; and

3 WHEREAS, Not only is the proposed repository in one of the  
4 most geologically active areas in the nation, but according to the  
5 Agency for Nuclear Projects, it is “the only repository under  
6 consideration in the world that is located above the water table, not  
7 below it”; and

8 WHEREAS, Even if the risks related to geologic disposal are  
9 ignored, the designation of Yucca Mountain is of particular concern  
10 because of its location within an area rife with seismic and  
11 hydrothermal activity and because of its proximity to numerous  
12 fractures and earthquake faults, which could lead to underground  
13 contamination; and

14 WHEREAS, As more problems are revealed, the Department of  
15 Energy has gravitated from the concept of geologic isolation and  
16 now is relying almost exclusively on “engineered barriers” to keep  
17 radiological materials from migrating out of a repository and into  
18 the environment, essentially ignoring the foundational  
19 recommendation of the National Academy of Sciences that  
20 manmade materials not be used to compensate for faulty geology or  
21 hydrology; and

22 WHEREAS, The Department of Energy contends it is better to  
23 have all nuclear waste at a single location rather than scattered  
24 around the country, yet this contention is flawed because Yucca  
25 Mountain will have limited capacity, contradicting the “one safe  
26 site” idea; and

27 WHEREAS, The Department of Energy has stated that most of  
28 the nation’s spent nuclear fuel is safely and securely stored at more  
29 than 70 reactor sites across the country and that, for the foreseeable  
30 future, the spent fuel can safely stay at the reactor sites until a  
31 permanent disposal solution is determined by the federal  
32 government; and

33 WHEREAS, The waste that would be shipped to Yucca Mountain  
34 is located at more than 70 sites across 35 states and, if transported,  
35 will impact at least 44 states and 703 counties; and

36 WHEREAS, A 2002 report from the Agency for Nuclear Projects  
37 found that Nevada’s economy stands to lose upwards of \$5.5 billion  
38 annually as a result of the stigmatizing effects of the repository and  
39 the transportation of nuclear waste through the State; and

40 WHEREAS, As early as 1986, the Department of Energy  
41 acknowledged the potential for impacts to a tourism-dependent  
42 economy, an issue of great concern in Nevada, stating “the potential  
43 for adverse public perception of a repository and its associated  
44 waste transportation could adversely affect the tourism industry”;  
45 and



1 WHEREAS, Nevada’s tourism industry generated nearly \$91  
2 billion in statewide economic activity and supported more than  
3 386,000 jobs in 2022, which means any impacts that reduce the  
4 number of visitors, especially to Las Vegas, would have major  
5 economic consequences for this State; and

6 WHEREAS, The Las Vegas Valley is one of the fastest growing  
7 areas in the nation, which further raises concerns because Yucca  
8 Mountain is located just 90 miles northwest of the Valley; and

9 WHEREAS, In April 2011, Congress ended federal funding for  
10 the Yucca Mountain site, pausing licensing activities for the  
11 proposed repository indefinitely into the future; and

12 WHEREAS, As recently as April 2024, leaders at a hearing of the  
13 House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Energy, Climate  
14 and Grid Security pitched restarting the conversation on resuming  
15 work towards opening the Yucca Mountain repository; and

16 WHEREAS, The Federal Government is not prepared to deal  
17 with, or even fully aware of, the effects of the Yucca Mountain  
18 project on society and this country; now, therefore, be it

19 RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF  
20 NEVADA, JOINTLY, That the numerous hurdles, potential health and  
21 safety issues, widespread economic impacts and logistical and  
22 transportation challenges are cause for reconsidering Yucca  
23 Mountain as the proposed site for a nuclear waste repository; and be  
24 it further

25 RESOLVED, That Nevada has already borne more than its fair  
26 share of this nation’s radioactive waste burdens, including, hosting  
27 hundreds of nuclear weapons tests during the Cold War and hosting  
28 the world’s largest low-level and mixed radioactive waste disposal  
29 facility at the Nevada Test Site, which is also controlled by the  
30 Department of Energy; and be it further

31 RESOLVED, That the issue of how to dispose of nuclear waste,  
32 the deadliest substance known to mankind, is of great importance,  
33 requiring decisions to be based on “sound science,” as was promised  
34 Nevada and the nation in 2000, before it is put on the roads,  
35 railways and waterways of this country; and be it further

36 RESOLVED, That with the abundance of safe, economical dry  
37 storage facilities at existing reactor sites, there is no current spent  
38 fuel emergency and nuclear power plants face no risk of shutdown,  
39 the members of the 83rd Session of the Nevada Legislature hereby  
40 urge President Trump and Congress and all involved agencies to  
41 recognize the unsuitability of Yucca Mountain as the site for a  
42 repository to store and dispose of spent nuclear fuel and high-level  
43 radioactive waste; and be it further

44 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of the Senate prepare and  
45 transmit a copy of this resolution to the President of the United



1 States, the Vice President of the United States as the presiding  
2 officer of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives,  
3 the Secretary of Energy and each member of the Nevada  
4 Congressional Delegation; and be it further  
5 RESOLVED, That this resolution becomes effective upon  
6 passage.

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