

Submitted Testimony April 10, 2019 from
Science Panel of the Sustainable Fuel Cycle Task Force
Represented by D. Warner North
on FY 2020 DOE & NRC Appropriations:
Support for Continuation of Yucca Mountain Funding

On behalf of the Science Panel of the Sustainable Fuel Cycle Task Force, we strongly support the Department of Energy's and NRC FY 2020 Budget Requests to provide funding to resume and complete the currently suspended Yucca Mountain NRC licensing proceeding.

We are scientists who have worked for decades to provide a scientifically sound approach for safely managing and disposing of used nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive wastes. It is our opinion, that the science behind Yucca Mountain was conducted to the highest standards, has withstood countless peer reviews, and is sound. However, this huge investment (~\$15B) is for naught if the final NRC licensing process is not completed.

The NRC licensing process is almost complete, and it is now imperative that the NRC and DOE complete the licensing process to determine if the site is qualified to receive a Construction Authorization. As is already provided for in our national regulatory process, the State of Nevada and other intervenors' concerns should be fairly resolved in an open and transparent manner before impartial NRC judges. This process should be allowed to resume and continue to its lawful conclusion without political interference. Over the past ten years, politics have been used to run roughshod over science, and it is now time to put science and the interests of our nation ahead of political agendas.

Although continuation of an ultimate realistic science-based geological repository, like Yucca Mountain, is key, we also support the development of integrated private interim centralized engineered storage facilities. Interim storage facilities can supplement eventual geologic disposal and accelerate the long-delayed removal of spent nuclear fuel and high-level wastes from existing shutdown nuclear sites. Such receipt facilities could also mitigate the ever-growing tens of billions of dollars in tax-payer liabilities that is being caused by the Federal Government's inability to meet their lawful contractual obligations.

It is the collective view of our Panel that it is essential that we move forward with implementing our national repository program and leave our country a better place for future generations. Saddling our children and grandchildren with spent nuclear fuel in dozens of temporary storage locations across the country adjacent to our rivers, lakes, and seashores along with seemingly endless financial liabilities for engineered storage alone is irresponsible. We need to act, and the time is now.