

GOVERNOR SANDOVAL AND ATTORNEY GENERAL LAXALT TAKE NEW STEP IN YUCCA OPPOSITION

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Governor Brian Sandoval announced today that, at his direction, the Agency for Nuclear Projects, in cooperation with Attorney General Adam Laxalt, intervened in a nuclear waste lawsuit filed by the State of Texas in federal court. This action follows Governor Sandoval's meeting two weeks ago with Bob Halstead, Executive Director of the Agency for Nuclear Projects, where he directed the Agency to leave no stone unturned and pursue all viable options to defeat the resurrection of the ill-conceived and dangerous Yucca Mountain repository project. The Agency has worked directly with the Office of the Attorney General to coordinate efforts to stop the storage of high-level nuclear waste near Las Vegas. The Texas lawsuit seeks to force the federal government to cut short the Yucca Mountain licensing process and put an end to the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) promising consent-based siting initiative for nuclear facilities. Nevada's action is just the first in a series of steps that will be taken over the next few weeks and months to protect Nevadans from efforts to resurrect the non-viable and hazardous Yucca Mountain repository project.

"Science has confirmed that Yucca Mountain is incapable of safe storage of the world's most toxic substance. The State of Nevada is prepared to successfully defeat this dangerous and ill-conceived project at every opportunity and in any venue," said Governor Brian Sandoval. "Texas's petition would drastically diminish Nevada's ability to present its case against Yucca Mountain by recklessly pushing forward with a fundamentally flawed project at the direct expense of the health and safety of our citizens. I would like to thank Attorney General Laxalt and Director Halstead for moving quickly to intervene and continue our state's relentless opposition to use the flawed Yucca Mountain project as the nation's nuclear waste dump."

"Any and all attempts to store unwanted nuclear waste in Yucca Mountain will be met with relentless resistance from my office," added Attorney General Adam

Laxalt. “And we will continue to fight the federal government’s dumping of nuclear waste within our borders, an unprecedented infringement of state sovereignty. Skilled and experienced attorneys within my Solicitor General’s Office, Natural Resources Division and outside experts are dedicating time and resources to ensure Nevada’s voice is heard and best interests are protected.”

The Texas lawsuit seeks to fast-track the type of federal overspending the Trump Administration has vowed to eliminate. Two applications are pending before the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, both with consent from their host states, for interim high-level nuclear waste facilities. This sign of willingness should not be ignored, but rather fostered by the Administration. A repository in a consenting state will save the taxpayers hundreds of millions in legal fees and project delays.

Texas Lawsuit Intervention

Texas, in a misguided effort to jump start the broken DOE nuclear waste program, seeks to force the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to complete the Yucca Mountain licensing proceeding in twelve months or less. This would prevent Nevada from fully presenting its case, based on 218 admitted technical and legal challenges, that Yucca Mountain is an unsafe site for disposal of these deadly wastes. Texas also seeks to prevent DOE from finding volunteer sites for nuclear waste storage and disposal using the consent-based siting process recommended by the Blue Ribbon Commission on America’s Nuclear Future.

The Nevada motion to intervene notes that the State has compelling interests “in protecting the health and safety of its citizens from radiological injuries and in protecting its lands and groundwater from radioactive contamination.” The motion to intervene also notes that transporting nuclear waste across Nevada poses substantial risks to the State, will increase radiation exposure to workers and the general public, and create the risk of severe accidents and sabotage incidents. “The cleanup costs and other economic impacts of transportation events resulting in the release of radioactive materials could, by DOE’s own estimates, amount to hundreds of millions and even billions of dollars.”

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