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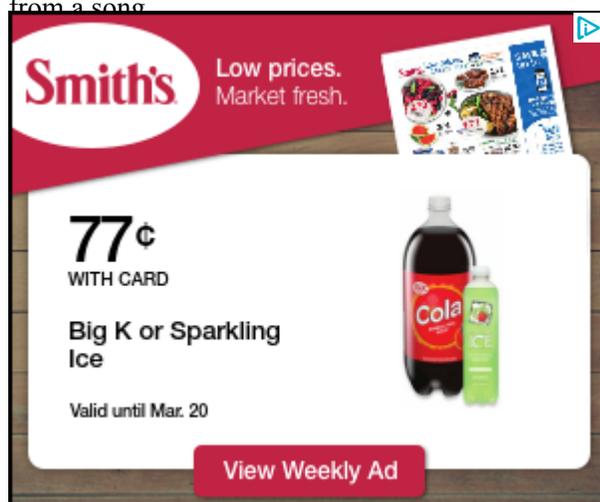
# Building a nuclear waste dump in Nevada is still the wrong thing to do

Wednesday, March 14, 2018 | 2 a.m.

During a recent congressional discussion on the proposed Yucca Mountain nuclear waste repository, Rep. John Shimkus of Illinois said, “There’s always hope that the elected leaders will do the right thing.”



He’s right. There certainly is hope that Congress and the Trump administration will abandon the project, close the door on any future discussion of it and end this horrific threat to Nevada forever and ever, amen, to borrow a line from a song



at. To him, as well as the Trump administration and others in start shipping hundreds of tons of the most deadly radioactive

Shimkus led an hour of speeches to lobby his colleagues in rs are calling for \$167.7 million to resume licensing of the included in the omnibus spending bill set to be released in

immediately with statements that amounted to shouts of “Not

by Commission’s) own analysis shows will lead to radioactive waste leaking into the water table and transportation plans would ship more than 70,000 metric tons of nuclear waste by train and truck through 329 congressional districts for years to come,” said Rep. Dina Titus, D-Nev. “Now, some of my colleagues are pushing legislation that makes this bad project even worse by breaking the caps on the amount of allowable waste to be stored, increasing the danger and invalidating any existing studies.

“If the proponents of Yucca Mountain and their industry donors are serious about solving the problem of nuclear waste storage, they would follow the Blue Ribbon Commission recommendations and pass my consent-based bill rather than dumping nuclear waste into a state that does not produce it and does not want it.”

As Titus concluded, “Nevada is not a wasteland.” Bravo to her and others who are trying to prevent the likes of Shimkus from turning the state into one.

The overwhelming majority of Nevadans have been against the project since it surfaced in the mid-1980s. And with good reason — actually, many good reasons.

As Titus pointed out, the transportation plan calls for highly radioactive waste to be transported by truck and train across 22,000 of miles of railways and 7,000 miles of highways, raising the threat of an accident or an attack that

would expose Americans to deadly levels of radiation.

In Las Vegas, the transportation route would cut literally through the heart of the city, including on train tracks that essentially run alongside Interstate 15. Considering that the material is so toxic that there would be measurable levels of radiation within a half-mile each way of the tracks — from waste in highly shielded containers, no less — an accident or attack could be catastrophic for the community.

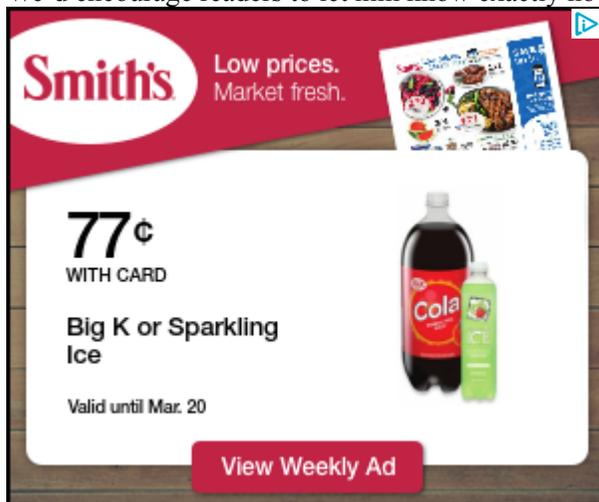
Then there’s the proposed dump site itself, just 90 miles northwest of Las Vegas. Due to its geology and its location in an area prone to seismic activity, there’s an inherent risk of radiation leaking into groundwater supplies and into the atmosphere through fissures. And how dangerous is this waste? Ten years after being removed from a nuclear reactor, it would still emit a lethal dose of radiation within 70 seconds to someone standing near it, unshielded. It will remain radioactive for thousands of years.

That said, so as not to alarm anyone, it’s important to point out that the proposed funding doesn’t pose an imminent threat of the project being built. One, it’s a drop in the bucket for the funding needed to build out the project — nearly \$100 billion over the next 100 years. Two, it likely wouldn’t even cover the costs of the licensing, which the Government Accountability Office has estimated at \$330 million. The GAO also forecast that the process would take five years.

But the movement by Shimkus is definitely a threat. For Nevadans, the Illinois Republican has long been a combination of Darth Vader and a Terminator robot. He’s hell-bent on turning Nevada into a dumping ground, and he just keeps coming.

We’d encourage readers to let him know exactly how Nevadans feel about the project, and to share their comments

g edition. Here’s how:



ington, DC 20515

website that he is “unable” to respond to anyone outside of his

• Mail: Ric Anderson, Las Vegas Sun, 2275 Corporate Circle, Henderson, NV 89074

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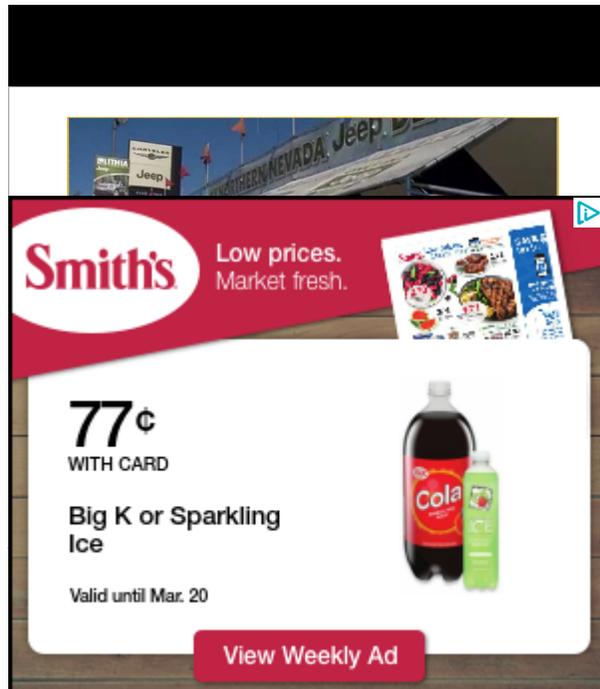
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