

EDITORIAL:

Illinois congressman is back to waste more time on Yucca Mountain

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Maybe the 11 congressmen who are scheduled to accompany Rep. John Shimkus this weekend on a tour of Yucca Mountain will get a nice meal and win a few bucks while they're in the Las Vegas area.



They're sure as hell not going to get a full picture of the proposed nuclear waste repository.

That's because Shimkus apparently doesn't want them to be fully informed about the disastrous project.

The Illinois congressman, who for years has been trying to ram Yucca Mountain down Nevadans' throats, rejected a request by expert opponents of the site to accompany the group, citing "logistical issues."

What a crock. The "logistical issue" here is that Shimkus doesn't want his guests anywhere near Nevadans who've followed the issue for decades and can cite the long list of reasons the waste dump would be horrible not only for Nevada but for the millions of Americans who live near the routes where radioactive material would be transported on its way to the desert.

This is no fact-finding tour. It's like the visitor experience in North Korea, where travelers are shown only what the government wants them to see.

So Kim Jong Un would be proud of Shimkus on this one, given that the congressman is hoping to gin up enough political support to overcome what he knows is overwhelming opposition to the project in Nevada.

"Researchers in the U.S. and abroad have found that a repository program can only be successful if the people consent," said Judy Treichel, executive director of the Nevada Nuclear Waste Task Force, the group Shimkus rejected. "Congressman Shimkus knows Nevada has not and will not consent, and clearly doesn't respect our views or long experience with government activities involving radioactive contamination of the environment."

Shimkus' reasoning for excluding the group was some ridiculousness about wanting to stay on a tight schedule because of the heat. Psst, Congressman, we could find you about, oh, a half-million places with air conditioning here in Las Vegas if you're looking for a cool place to engage with experts.

Shimkus would probably point out that he invited members of the Nevada congressional delegation, but that's smokescreening. The delegation has already made Shimkus and his group aware of what they know about the site.

"This is an obvious political stunt from Congressman Shimkus, and I'm not going to be a part of it," Rep. Jacky Rosen, D-Nev., said in an emailed statement. "I explicitly requested that scientific and geological experts be allowed to join the tour of the Yucca Mountain site, so that they could shed light on how this reckless project will

negatively affect Nevadans. If Congressman Shimkus won't fulfill this reasonable request, then he has no business coming to our state this weekend or trying to revive Yucca Mountain as a nuclear waste dump.”

So to Shimkus' guests, we'd invite them to contact us if they're interested in getting a 360-degree view instead of window dressing. We'll be happy to facilitate a meeting with the task force.

The visitors, in alphabetical order, are: Joe Barton, R-Texas; Larry Bucshon, R-Ind.; Jeff Duncan, R-S.C.; Neal Dunn, R-Fla.; Brett Guthrie, R-Ky.; Doug LaMalfa, R-Calif.; Don Norcross, D-N.J.; Mark Sanford, R-S.C.; David Valadao, R-Calif.; Greg Walden, R-Ore.; and Steve Womack, R-Ark.

If they'd like to get a complete view of Yucca Mountain from Nevadans' perspective, they can reach us via our editorial page editor, Ric Anderson, at 702-259-2333.

Otherwise, here's hoping they enjoy goofing around during their Las Vegas junket. Because that's all their trip here will amount to.

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