

Posted March 13, 2017 - 11:19am Updated March 13, 2017 - 12:20pm

Attempts to revive Yucca Mountain project will cost feds \$1.66B, Nevada director reports

<http://www.reviewjournal.com/news/politics-and-government/nevada/attempts-revive-yucca-mountain-project-will-cost-feds-166b>

By SEAN WHALEY
REVIEW-JOURNAL CAPITAL BUREAU

CARSON CITY — Nevada will continue to fight any attempt to restart the Yucca Mountain project as the site to bury the nation's high-level radioactive waste, and supporters should walk away from the moribund effort, a state official told state lawmakers on Monday.

Bob Halstead, in a budget presentation from the Nevada Agency for Nuclear Projects, said the state will contest 218 elements in any Department of Energy license application, with another 30 to 50 challenges anticipated based on new information.

The contentions cover areas including site suitability, the disposal concept, groundwater impacts and transportation issues. Nevada officials estimate that a licensing hearing would require over 400 days, taking an estimated four to five years at a cost to the DOE \$1.66 billion.

The process would cost Nevada about \$50 million, with half coming in state funds and half from the federal government.

In a report to a joint Senate Finance and Assembly Ways and Means subcommittee, Halstead, executive director of the agency, said Yucca Mountain is totally unprepared to accept nuclear waste.

Nothing is there now except a 5-mile exploratory tunnel that cannot be used for storage or disposal. The site would require 40 miles of tunnels to accept waste, the report said.

The site has no state water permit, no railroad and an expired land withdrawal from the U.S. Bureau of Land Management.

A licensing hearing could commence in the 2017-18 fiscal year, Halstead said.

Gov. Brian Sandoval has remained steadfast in his opposition to reestablishing Yucca as a repository.

It is not clear whether the Trump administration will support [reviving the shuttered program](#) to permanently store 77,000 tons of high-level radioactive waste – primarily spent fuel from commercial power reactors – in the Nye County Mountain. Proponents in Congress have indicated they want to push ahead with the project.

During his confirmation hearing in January, Department of Energy secretary Rick Perry left open the possibility that the nation’s highly radioactive waste could be entombed in Yucca Mountain. The former Texas governor [did not say he supported reviving the project](#).

Contact Sean Whaley at swhaley@reviewjournal.com or 775-461-3820. Follow [@seanw801](#) on Twitter.

What exists today at Yucca Mountain

- A 5-mile exploratory tunnel that cannot be used for storage or disposal
- No waste disposal tunnels
- No waste handling facilities
- No state water permit
- No construction authorization
- No railroad
- Expired BLM land withdrawal