

Nevada official says House vote on Yucca funding no shock

By [Cy Ryan \(contact\)](#)

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CARSON CITY — The director of the state's effort to stop the federal government from putting a nuclear waste repository at Yucca Mountain says he's not surprised by a vote in the House of Representative to move forward with licensing the facility.



A House bill includes \$120 million for the Department of Energy and \$30 million for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to begin hearings on whether to license the Yucca repository.

Robert Halstead, director of the Nevada Office of Nuclear Projects, said today he's optimistic the U.S. Senate will nix funding the hearings.

"Sens. (Dean) Heller and (Catherine) Cortez Masto have a lot of influence," Halstead said. Heller released a statement on Thursday saying he's committed to fight the House bill.

Halstead said the Senate Appropriations Committee did not include funding for Yucca Mountain. But, he said, "Who knows what will happen in a House-Senate Conference Committee."

President Donald Trump has included the money in his budget to restart the licensing hearings.

Even if Congress appropriates the money, Halstead said, Nevada would have a strong case to stop the project at hearings before the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and in the courts.

The state intends to file new lawsuit in the coming months, he said.

Nevada has been fighting for more than 20 years to stop the designation of Yucca Mountain as a high-level repository.

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