

Las Vegas Review Journal

Lawmaker makes a last-minute plea to derail Yucca Mountain bill

Posted at: <https://www.reviewjournal.com/news/politics-and-government/nevada/lawmaker-makes-a-last-minute-plea-to-derail-yucca-mountain-bill/>

By Gary Martin Review-Journal Washington Bureau
October 19, 2017 - 12:06 pm

WASHINGTON — A Las Vegas lawmaker is making a last-minute plea to stop a House energy bill that would jumpstart the stalled Yucca Mountain nuclear waste project in Nevada.

Rep. Jacky Rosen, D-Nev., sent a letter to House Armed Services Committee Chairman Mac Thornberry, R-Texas, and the ranking Democrat, Rep. Adam Smith of Washington, asking them to stop the Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act of 2017 because of Air Force concerns of encroachment at Nellis Air Force Base.

Air Force Secretary Heather Wilson told the Review-Journal this year that transport of high-level nuclear waste to Yucca Mountain would impact combat drills at the Nevada Test and Training Range.

The NTTR is the largest air and ground training space in the contiguous United States.

Rosen, a member of the Armed Services Committee, cited the Air Force secretary's comments that developing Yucca Mountain as a nuclear waste repository "threatens national security by adversely impacting the ability of Nellis Air Force Base to complete its core mission."

She is urging the chairman and ranking members of the Armed Services Committee to stop the bill from advancing.

The House nuclear waste bill was passed out of committee earlier this year on a 49-4 vote.

It provides \$120 million for the Department of Energy to continue the licensing application process with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. The legislation also includes funds to explore temporary storage of the materials.

A full vote in the House is expected as early as next week.

The Senate has yet to take up legislation to address nuclear waste storage from power plants, and the upper chamber has historically been at odds with the House.

Sen. Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., chairman of the Senate Appropriations energy and water development subcommittee, wants a more robust interim storage program.

Nevada Gov. Brian Sandoval and most of the state's congressional delegation is opposed to creating a nuclear waste repository at Yucca Mountain, located 90 miles northwest of Las Vegas.

Rep. Mark Amodei, R-Nev., and nine rural counties, including Nye County where Yucca Mountain is located, support continuation of the licensing process to determine if the project is safe and should be developed.

Contact Gary Martin at 202-662-7390
or gmartin@reviewjournal.com. Follow [@garymartindc](https://twitter.com/garymartindc) on Twitter.