



GOVERNOR GREG ABBOTT

September 30, 2020

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Thank you for all you do to ensure a prosperous economy and strong energy industry in the United States. I write to express my opposition to the license applications to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) for the consolidated interim storage of spent nuclear fuel and high-level waste at proposed sites within the state of Texas and within the state of New Mexico, close to the Texas border. A stable oil and gas industry is essential to the economy, and crucial to the security of our great nation. Allowing the interim storage of spent nuclear fuel and high-level nuclear waste at sites near the largest producing oilfield in the world will compromise the safety of the region.

The proposed facilities would be sited in the Permian Basin Region, which is the largest producing oilfield in the world, surpassing Saudi Arabia's Ghawar Field. There are approximately 250,000 active oil-and-gas wells in Texas' portion of the Permian Basin, and more than 40,000 in New Mexico's portion. In 2019, oil production in the Permian Basin Region exceeded a record 1.5 billion barrels of oil, 80 percent of which were produced in Texas. In 2018, the Permian Basin produced more than 30 percent of total U.S. crude oil and contained more than 40 percent of proved oil reserves. Needless to say, the Permian Basin is a significant economic and natural resource for the entire country, and the proposed storage facilities would place America's recovering economy and energy security at great risk.

The NRC is currently evaluating issuance of a 40-year license to Interim Storage Partners (ISP) for a consolidated interim storage facility in west Texas as well as issuance of a 40-year license to Holtec International for such a facility in southeastern New Mexico. As proposed, the ISP facility would store commercial spent nuclear fuel and reactor-related materials, presenting a radiological risk greater than currently authorized for storage and disposal in Texas. ISP has also indicated it may seek to renew the license for an additional 20 years, which would result in an operating life of 60 years, or until a permanent facility is established.

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Congress began working on a permanent solution to storing nuclear waste with the passage of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act in 1982. Today, 38 years later, there is still no permanent storage solution. The proposed sites in Texas and New Mexico do not provide the deep geologic isolation required for permanent storage in order to minimize the risks of accidents, terrorism, or sabotage, which could disrupt the country's energy supply with catastrophic effects on the American economy.

In an April 2019 letter to the Department of Energy and NRC regarding this issue, I expressed my opposition to forcing states with low-level radioactive waste to accept more highly radioactive waste and its accompanying hazards without the consent of the state. I reiterate this concern and my opposition to increasing the amount or concentration of radioactive waste permitted to be disposed of in Texas without state approval.

Because of the many risks associated with these projects, the lack of a permanent storage facility, and the importance of the Permian Basin to the economy and energy security of the country, I respectfully urge you to join me in opposing the siting of an interim storage facility in Texas or in New Mexico. Thank you for your consideration of these concerns and for all you do for our great nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg Abbott". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Greg Abbott
Governor

GA:cgk