WASHINGTON, D.C. – An Inspector General’s report released today stops short of recommending criminal prosecutions in a Yucca Mountain science scandal, but Nevada’s two Senators say it underscores the fact that the proposed Yucca Mountain nuclear dump is unsafe and scientifically unsound.

Sen. Harry Reid (D-NV) and John Ensign (R-NV) asked for an investigation after e-mails surfaced last year alleging that government scientists falsified some test results for the Yucca Mountain project. The tests looked at water infiltration at the proposed dump site. The falsified work compromised quality assurance requirements and raised questions about the accuracy of other health and safety data related to Yucca.

The Inspector General of the Department of Energy, the Inspector General of the Department of the Interior, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation looked into the allegations. Today, they announced they would not pursue criminal charges, citing among other issues the length of time between when the e-mails were written and when they were discovered as obstacles to building a case. However, the Inspector General noted that “the actions of those involved … have had the effect of undermining public confidence in the quality of the science associated with the Yucca Mountain Project.”

Senators Reid and Ensign say today’s decision has no impact on their opposition to Yucca Mountain.

“The science that DOE claims is supporting Yucca Mountain is sloppy, and in some cases it’s actually false,” said Reid. “That’s a much bigger concern than whether a couple of employees will go to jail. The Yucca Mountain project is a complete failure. It has failed every legitimate health, safety, and scientific test. I’m going to continue working to stop Yucca Mountain altogether.”

“The prospect of criminal prosecutions is secondary to the underlying fact that the science presented by the USGS and the DOE is faulty, misguided and fraudulent,” said Ensign. “The emails in question show clearly that data has been manipulated or fabricated, and the ensuing hearings have brought this important aspect to light. No case has been made, nor can it be made, that the storage of high-level nuclear waste at Yucca Mountain is scientifically sound. I intend to thoroughly review the Attorney General’s report, but regardless of the AG’s findings the scientific case put forth by Yucca Mountain supporters is as weak as ever.”

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