YUCCA MOUNTAIN PRICE SWELLS TO MORE THAN $90 BILLION AND COUNTING

Berkley Testifies at House Hearing Against Proposed Dump

(Washington D.C. – July 15, 2008) Congresswoman Shelley Berkley (D-NV) today testified before a House Commerce subcommittee looking into the failed Yucca Mountain project. In her testimony, Berkley stressed Nevada’s continued opposition to housing toxic radioactive waste and pointed to the danger to more than 50 million Americans that would accompany decades of these shipments. New figures provided by the Energy Department following the hearing also show that the cost of the proposed dump 90 minutes from Las Vegas has swelled to more than $90 billion.

“When it comes to the Yucca Mountain dump two things are certain, the cost only goes up and the delays only grow longer. Now the price tag for the Bush-McCain Yucca Mountain plan has swelled to more than $90 billion, a double digit increase from last year’s estimate,” said Berkley. “Even without this additional cost, Yucca Mountain already qualifies as grade ‘A’ radioactive pork. We could spend a tiny fraction of that amount to pay for keeping waste safely on-site at existing plants for the next 100 years. That would also avoid the danger to 50 million Americans from decades of nuclear waste barreling down our nation’s roads and railways. I am amazed at the willingness of Yucca Mountain’s supporters to spend record sums on this failed effort, including the billions that have already been wasted with nothing to show but a hole in the Nevada desert,” said Berkley.

In her testimony before the House Subcommittee on Energy and Air Quality, Berkley emphasized Nevada’s long standing opposition to Yucca Mountain because of safety concerns and a long list of unanswered scientific shortcomings, including the threat from earthquakes and volcanoes.
“Nevada families remain overwhelmingly opposed to our home state becoming this nation’s nuclear garbage dump. Over the past 25 years, we have been fighting Yucca Mountain for one simple reason -- it’s not safe,” said Berkley.

The Congresswoman also challenged false claims that Yucca Mountain would somehow eliminate all nuclear waste now being kept at nuclear power plants operating nationwide.

“We are not creating one repository to hold all waste for all time; we are just creating one more place where toxic nuclear waste will be stored. That is the dirty little secret that the nuclear power industry does not want you to know – Yucca Mountain will not eliminate nuclear waste from any plant where energy is still being made,” Berkley said.

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