

November 13, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McCarthy,

Representing tens of thousands of people that have opposed consolidated interim storage of spent nuclear fuel in New Mexico and Texas, we urge you to not include Section 306 of the Fiscal Year 2021 Senate Energy and Water Development Appropriations bill. That provision wisely has been rejected by Congress each year for the past eight years and would amend the Nuclear Waste Policy Act to allow federal government funding of private consolidated interim storage in our states. Such a change in law is unwise and unworkable policy, is contrary to the wishes of Republican and Democratic governors and the overwhelming majority of the people of the affected states, and would not result in such storage facilities operating.

The nation needs a new policy to address storage and disposal of commercial spent nuclear fuel, which endangers present and future generations for thousands of years. But “temporary” sites to consolidate the dangerous waste in the Permian Basin with much of the nation’s current oil and gas production is dangerous, as well as being bad policy.

New Mexico Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham and Texas Governor Greg Abbott have clearly stated their opposition to the proposed projects in both states, and the overwhelming majority of the thousands of people that have participated in hearings and written comments strongly oppose the two projects.

Because of the opposition, the projects will never operate, as was demonstrated by the Private Fuel Storage Facility in Utah, which was licensed in 2006 as a consolidated interim storage facility, but has never been constructed or operated.

An essential step towards developing a publicly accepted, scientifically sound nuclear waste storage and disposal policy is to drop the idea that, in the absence of a viable repository program, any consolidated storage site would be temporary or acceptable in our states.

Please do not adopt the Section 306 program in any Energy and Water Development Appropriations bill.

Thank you for your consideration.

Alliance for Environmental Strategies
Rose Gardner, Eunice, NM

Citizen Action

Dave McCoy, Albuquerque, NM

Citizens for Alternatives to Radioactive Dumping (CARD)

Janet Greenwald, Dixon, NM

Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety

Joni Arends, Santa Fe, NM

Energía Mía

Alice Canestaro-Garcia, San Antonio, TX

Interfaith Worker Justice - New Mexico

Rev. Holly Beaumont, D. Min., Santa Fe, NM

Multicultural Alliance for a Safe Environment

Susan Gordon, Santa Fe, NM

Northeast New Mexicans United Against Nuclear Waste

Ed or Patty Hughs, Quay, Union, Harding, and San Miguel Counties of NM

Nuclear Free World Committee of the Dallas Peace and Justice Center

Mavis Belisle, Dallas, TX

Nuclear Watch New Mexico

Scott Kovac, Santa Fe, NM

Office of Life, Peace, Justice & Creation

Rose Marie Cecchini, MM, Gallup, NM

Parkland Hills Neighborhood Association

Robert Leming, President, Albuquerque, NM

Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club

Mary Hotvedt, Chair, Albuquerque, NM

Sustainable Energy & Economic Development (SEED) Coalition

Karen Hadden, Austin, TX

Southwest Research and Information Center

Don Hancock, Albuquerque, NM

Tewa Women United - Environmental Health and Justice Program
Beata Tsosie, Northern Pueblos of New Mexico, Rio Arriba County, NM

The Peace Farm
Cletus Stein, Amarillo, TX

Tsaya'In/Circle of Grandmothers, Tewa Women United
Elder Kathy Sanchez, Northern Pueblos of New Mexico, Rio Arriba County, NM

Tularosa Basin Downwinders Consortium
Tina Cordova, Albuquerque, NM