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Our New Voice in Congress

P O L I C Y O V E R V I E W

NEVADA'S FUTURE

Nevada's future is OUR future. The commitment to work toward innovative solutions at the Federal level to improve the lives of all Nevadan's is a big part of serving in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Nevada's future will be much brighter if we roll up our sleeves and address the issues that most affect our state. This includes our Members of Congress, the Governor's office, State Representatives, business owners, and residents.

As you've seen in our "**12 Big Ideas for Nevada**", issues including education, school safety, jobs, women's rights, homelessness, taxes, the 2nd Amendment, making Social Security fully funded and solvent, and solving the high costs of health insurance and prescription drugs, supporting our Armed Forces and their families, fixing immigration, and creating new industries all contribute to a better tomorrow for Nevada's residents.

Additional programs I am proposing, such as **NEEDS**, which will create startup incubators across our state; **ASSET** for our military; and **STAR**, to fund school safety and education; are all important and work in synergy to propel our state forward and improve the lives of all Nevadans.

There is more to be done. Below, I share some thoughts on multiple areas that, in addition to the "12 Big Ideas for Nevada", are important to address for our future:

1. Returning Federal Lands to Nevada's Care
2. Crime
3. Banking for State Legalized Industries
4. Rising Auto Insurance Rates
5. Yucca Mountain

15 Million Acres: This Land is Your Land, Except When it's Not.

When I moved to Nevada in 2010, I was surprised to learn 84.9 percent of Nevada's land is owned by the Federal government. According to a lands summary by the state of Nevada in 2015, the government owned 58,226,015 acres of the approximately 70,000,000 total acres in Nevada. By comparison, the government owns the least amount of land in Rhode Island—5,157 acres of the state's 677,120 total acres (less than 1%).

Throughout Nevada, the land is divided between the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Bureau of Reclamation, Department of Defense, Department of Energy, Fish and Wildlife Services, Forest Service and National Park Service. The land these organizations oversee covers approximately 93,000 square miles of the 110,000 square miles in Nevada's borders.

Placed on a map, the amount of land owned by the Federal government looks like parasites about to take over the body of the host.

The Federal government's extraordinarily large involvement in the management of western lands is far more than a conflict about grazing, water, mining, logging and other development. It pits the principle of good stewardship of the land, for the welfare of present and future generations, against one of America's foundational axioms: That government is best which governs least.

In 2013, the Nevada Legislature passed AB227 which

created a task force to study the implications of transferring public lands to the state. The Task Force was made up of one member of the County Commission from each of the seventeen counties in the Nevada and reported their findings to the legislature. The Task Force determined Nevada could both afford to make the transition and, if it were to **manage its own public land, could expect a net revenue, at a minimum, of \$350 million a year.**

As you've read my positions on policy, you have come to understand that I believe local control is more successful and serves the public good better than Federal control (except for key national elements such as, for instance, social services, coordinated school safety programs, controlling health care costs, and the military). It's simply impossible for a group of bureaucrats 2,322 miles away to understand the best use of land in Nevada.

If elected to represent you, I will work with other members of Nevada's congressional delegation and our two Senators to put forth a plan for the Federal government to turn over ownership of up to 15,000,000± acres of land to state ownership within 5 years.

This land will be owned by the citizens of Nevada, controlled by the state, and made available for use as currently operated. Land earmarked for disposal by the Federal government will be included. The National Parks, National Monuments, military and Indian lands and some other special designation lands will remain under Federal control.

For hunters and fisherman, ecologists, hikers and campers, the environmental community, and those concerned about natural resources, the transfer from Federal to state ownership must **include a full transfer of all valid existing rights and uses.** If you want to hunt, fish, camp, graze, or do whatever on these public lands now, you will be able to do so after transfer of ownership to the state.

Whatever you can do now, you will be able to do in the future. The only difference will be the land will be owned and managed by the state and access and use will be better protected.

The transfer must take place in such a manner to guarantee the public lands will remain public and cannot be sold to private entities.

Use of the public lands in Nevada will be available to everyone in the nation but it will be up to the people of Nevada to ensure the natural resources are protected and used wisely. A percentage of fishing and hunting license fees can be earmarked for preservation of lands, restocking of game and fish, and studies to determine and measure the health of the ecosystem. Treasure hunters, campers, hikers, and others

accessing the land can pay a small daily fee which will help support the preservation of the countryside.

The many mountainous, arid and difficult-to-reach tracts of land in Nevada simply are not attractive to farmers, but they are good for outdoor sports and grazing. By keeping the land publicly-owned, we can guarantee our cattle farmers and ranchers have access to large swathes of needed grass on which to feed their animals, while securing grazing fees to help with preservation and upkeep.

In taking ownership in the land, I will work for the removal and dissolution of any fines incurred over the past 10 years that have not been paid to the Federal government. These fines, mostly due to grazing fees not being paid or licenses not being purchased, were to be paid to the Federal government and largely affect Nevada residents. As the new overseer of the land, **Nevada should forgive all past due fines and start fresh with new usage fees, giving every Nevadan a chance to use our land.**

We will look at ways to **protect our state's 38 endangered species**—22 endangered and 16 threatened—such as the desert tortoise, chub, bull trout and more, while also protecting the outdoor needs of Nevada's residents. Some of these actions to protect our environment will not please everyone, but on the whole, gaining ownership of 10-15 million acres of land will benefit all of Nevada for generations to come.

I believe state ownership will be more responsive to the preferences of the people who wish to use the land. I believe our Nevada representatives will be good stewards of the land and will expand the necessary natural resources departments and personnel to ensure these lands remain viable ecologically and commercially for generations to come.

Congress can easily right this discriminatory wrong. As the leader of the US Senate, former Senator Harry Reid could have proposed legislation reverting the land to Nevada's control, and Republicans in the House would have enthusiastically agreed, but this never occurred.

It's time we took possession of Federal lands and restored our state's rights to manage the land within our boundaries.

Access to Banking for State Legalized Industries

"Congress has determined that marijuana is a dangerous drug and that the illegal distribution and sale of marijuana is a serious crime that provides a significant source of revenue to large-scale criminal enterprises, gangs, and cartels" – The Cole Memo.

This memo, written by James M. Cole, former Deputy Attorney General of the U.S. Department of Justice, outlines

the DOJ's stance on many topics such as preventing distribution to minors, preventing revenue from the sale of cannabis from going to criminal enterprises, gangs, and cartels, preventing violence, growing on public lands, and possession on federal property. It also states that outside these enforcement priorities, the Federal government has traditionally relied on states and local law enforcement agencies to address cannabis activity through enforcement of their own narcotics laws.

Nevada and other states have enacted laws that authorize cannabis production, distribution, and possession by establishing regulatory schemes. The Federal government's guidance is that it expects the states to implement strong and effective regulatory and enforcement systems, which Nevada and others have done. Thus, a tightly regulated market helps to keep criminal enterprises at bay. Plants are tracked from seedling to final product to distribution and sale.

With over half the country's states enacting legal cannabis laws in one form or another, there are more cannabis businesses than ever in an industry that is expected to grow exponentially. But the cash component is not effectively tracked, largely because the vast majority of cannabis businesses cannot open and operate bank accounts, and are thus relegated to dealing in cash...lots of cash.

Despite the prevalence of these state laws, many **business owners cannot obtain legal banking services** because of arcane and outdated banking laws enacted at the Federal level. This leads to large amounts of cash stored at dispensaries, offices, warehouses, and even homes, making this industry ripe for criminal activities. It also means the net receipts of legal cannabis sales have the potential to be moved around in cash transactions, making them ripe for money laundering.

The best means to prevent this is through making banking accessible to cannabis businesses.

When you open a business account at a bank, you need to prove that your business is legal, that you are insured and licensed, and that you are compliant with state laws. Financial institutions are legally obliged to report your account if any illegal activity is suspected, and any investigations that may ensue will cost the business owner time and money. There is also a risk that your business may be interrupted. But with the cannabis ecosystem in Nevada under state regulation, these are all provable.

Continual compliance is possible within the current system and banks should not be held potentially liable for actions its customers take, especially when acted upon under state laws.

Under Federal regulations, banks are not permitted to handle money from cannabis businesses. Because the Federal government classifies cannabis as a "Schedule 1" drug, on par

with heroin, banks that handle cannabis money could be charged with money laundering. Meanwhile, companies are shipping large amounts of cash to state capitals in order to pay the required taxes, often subjecting those transporting cash (for instance, driving from Las Vegas to Carson City) to possible theft or worse.

This doesn't only affect those growing and selling cannabis. Advertising agencies, law firms, printers, packaging, testing equipment, fertilizers, distribution, and other companies who work in the cannabis industry also find it difficult, if not impossible, to legally deposit the money they earn into a corporate bank account.

Cannabis is projected to become a \$7-\$8 billion business this year with expected tax revenues of approximately \$1 billion. Handling large amounts of cash is a burden on any business—just ask any casino operator. Besides the risk of theft, companies face confiscation by local police departments, and banks face risks because they are required to prove that firms are not selling to minors, funding crime groups, and not using the pretext of selling marijuana to push illegal drugs. As long as banking remains outside the use of the cannabis industry a huge underground economy of cash and digital currency transactions will occur. It behooves us to legalize the banking of cannabis receipts, as well as any other industry that is legal under state laws, to ensure these industries operate within the confines of the law.

As your voice in Congress, I will introduce straightforward legislation that states, "banks, savings and loans, and other financial institutions may provide banking services to any industry that is legal under the state laws in which the bank operates, regardless of the type of business or its products."

This simple act would instantly change the availability of banking services for cannabis (and other state legalized businesses) even while marijuana is classified as a "Schedule 1" drug. It would bring the last remaining piece of the cannabis industry out of the shadows.

Crime Is An Increasing Problem for Nevadans

Crime is a problem that is increasingly difficult to combat. As a state that is spread out, largely rural, and whose two biggest cities are destination points for tens of millions of visitors, Nevada has unique crime enforcement challenges.

Like many issues, crime does not have a one-answer solution. Crime occurs primarily because of lack of economic security. Poverty, parental neglect, low self-esteem, alcohol and drug abuse are all connected in explaining why people commit crimes. Some people are simply at greater risk of

becoming offenders because of the circumstances into which they are born.

Crime is a fact, a matter of law. It is not an opinion. As society changes, some actions which used to be criminal, for example, are no longer criminal. Take for instance, legalized prostitution in most of Nevada or legalized medical marijuana in 28 states and the District of Columbia. Likewise, some actions, such as smoking in public places are turned into criminal acts.

The causes of crime are complex. Most people today accept that poverty, parental neglect, low self-esteem, alcohol and drug abuse are all connected in explaining why people commit crimes. Some people are simply at greater risk of becoming offenders because of the circumstances into which they are born. Individual weakness or lack of 'values' may be two reasons why people commit crimes. Ultimately if someone chooses to commit a crime, that is their responsibility. If caught, the individual should pay the consequences.

Nevada has among the lowest high school and college graduation rates, which experts say tends to lead to higher poverty rates. Nearly one-third of our Native American residents live in poverty. 22% of African American and 19% of Latinos live in poverty. 12% of Caucasians and 9% of Asian join that group. Among these groups are 26,000 homeless, of which many turn to petty theft to get by.

What else contributes to crime?

- We rank 47th in affordable housing.
- 16% of population are what are called "disconnected youth", those ages 18 to 24 without high school degrees who were not in school or working.
- We rank 51st—dead last—in higher education attainment; the percentage of young adults ages 25 to 34 who had an associate's degree or higher.

The way out of the poverty trap is through education, retraining, housing, and job availability (which I address in "**12 Big Ideas for Nevada**").

Many people feel that if punishments were stronger and the police and the courts had more powers, there would be less crime. Others believe that in order to tackle crime, the social conditions which create the conditions for crime need to be addressed. Therefore, better housing, better employment opportunities, and a more equal society will make crime less of an attraction. If people are in work and are content with life, they will be less motivated to break the law. The fact is both sides are correct.

More than ever before, Nevada faces rising property crime, including the following exclusive groups: vandalism

(including motor vehicle and property vandalism); all motor vehicle theft related incidents; housebreaking; personal theft; burglary and robbery.

According to *USA Today*, **Nevada is one of the top 5 states for likelihood of a person becoming a victim of crime.** *Neighborhood Scout* reported there were 95,983 violent and property crimes in Nevada last year. That equals 32.65 crimes per 1,000 residents. With our state population near 3,000,000, Nevada's crime rates compared to the entire United States is, to put it mildly, out of whack.

Nevada is higher in murder, rape, and robbery, than the national average, with robbery being over double the national average. Our burglary rate is 30% higher than the national average and our motor vehicle theft rate is nearly double. Our heroin and opioid problems are escalating as well and continued use of these drugs often leads users to turn to crime to support their illegal habits.

Nevada ranks among the worst in the country for its robbery rate, motor-vehicle theft rate, and aggravated assault rate. It also ranks high in categories like burglaries and forcible rape.

Much of the crime, state officials maintain, comes from the millions of tourists who visit Las Vegas, Reno and other cities with casinos and related entertainment.

Some crime can be linked to the national heroin epidemic, gang activity, a lack of jobs, and lingering woes from the recession. A rapid rise in suburban poverty may be contributing to the increase in property crime and today there are actually more poor people living in suburbs than in the big cities of our major metro areas.

The city of Las Vegas and surrounding area is unique in that its problems have been mostly blamed on policy decisions.

According to leaders within the Las Vegas metropolitan police department, the city's troubles can be attributed to a shortage of uniformed patrolmen, less jail space and California's effort to reduce prison overcrowding.

New laws in neighboring California have allowed the release of prisoners. Since 2011, California has given early release to about 30,000 prisoners due to overcrowding. Many of these people have made their way to Nevada, mostly in Las Vegas and Reno, and have been caught committing crimes.

In cities like Las Vegas, decentralizing the police department's Gang Unit opened the door for gang members. When gang members from California come east to Las Vegas, they quickly learn that the lack of police on the streets is the equivalent of letting them know they are no longer targets for law enforcement. Metro Police Undersheriff Kevin McMahill

has said the enforcement part of the Gang Unit dropped to just 14 people, which he said made the unit “*ineffective*.” The Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department has arrested enough ex-convicts from California on robbery, shooting and homicide charges to consider it an “*influx*”.

What stands out is Nevada is visited by a lot of people from the Oakland, California area, and many have arrest records. This will likely increase as the Oakland Raiders move to Southern Nevada and their fans—considered by many to be the most rowdy of all NFL teams—come to town to attend games and party. How bad is Oakland? During the first decade of the 21st century Oakland has consistently been listed as one of the most dangerous large cities in the United States and ranks highly in California for most categories of crime. Violent crimes including assault, rape and murder, occur from two to five times the US average.

As more visitors from Oakland descend on Las Vegas to follow their Raiders football team, we must be prepared to fight what is likely to be an increase in crime and the best way to do that is through the hiring of additional police officers.

To rebuild the Las Vegas Gang Unit, they require about 100 trained police officers. These must be new hires as removing officers from patrol area commands where they’re desperately needed would open those areas to burglary, assault and other crimes. With the new NFL team coming, one possible solution is to enact a convenience tax on ticket sales and hotel rooms during Raider home games that would be earmarked for hiring of police officers.

Las Vegas Metro has fewer cops per capita than many police agencies in the United States. The average major police department has 2.42 officers per 1,000 residents. The Los Angeles Police Department has 2.62; Metro has 1.72. The state of Nevada had 76 law enforcement agencies employing 6,643 sworn police officers, with each officer needing to protect and serve 442 people.

Here’s the big difference between Las Vegas and most cities: the per-capita comparison doesn’t take into account the 42 million tourists who visit Nevada every year. When this is factored in, every single police officer becomes responsible for the protection of not 442 people, but 6,623. Based on limited research, I believe LVMPD has the highest ratio of public to police officers in the nation. That does not bode well for creating a safe community. These are issues the city, county and state must resolve and while Congress can provide some relief, most of these issues must be addressed locally.

The demographics of tourists visiting Nevada is also changing. Caucasians still make up the majority of visitors at 63%,

although that is a decline of 6%. In the past few years, the number of Hispanic visitors has gone up 40% and the number of African American visitors has doubled. The average annual income of visitors to the state has declined.

Visitor interests have changed, too, especially among those 35 years old and younger. Non-gamers have increased from 34% in 2011 to over 42% in 2015. Core gamers, those that gamble over \$100 a visit, have declined by 5% over the same time period. Younger visitors don’t come to gamble as they once did: they come to go to clubs, drink, gain access to marijuana and other drugs, and are more likely to end up partying all night long, and drive under the influence. By the way, the change in demographics is why it is so important to begin attracting new industries to our state.

With all that said, there are ways to obtain assistance from the Federal government, which I will pursue as your voice in Congress.

- One such option may be the ability to funnel retiring and honorably discharged Armed Forces personnel into Nevada law enforcement and to provide training and salary funds as part of job retraining for military members.
- Another option may be to leverage Department of Homeland Security funds to ensure city, county, state law enforcement agencies and emergency responders have interoperable communications systems and Internet-based software platforms for sharing crime statistics, criminal activity, and leads. Funds may also be available to pay for hiring more police officers.
- It may also be possible for the Federal government to ensure major cities have interoperability to this type of platform so gang units in Oakland, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Reno and Las Vegas can track and share information.
- Southern Nevada also has a shortage of available jail cells which must be addressed.

I will work to increase funding for three key Justice Department grants that help states reduce recidivism and improve the corrections system: the Second Chance Act, the Justice Reinvestment Initiative, and the Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program.

- The Second Chance Act funds grants that help people avoid returning to jail or prison. These grants helped Allegheny County, Pennsylvania (Pittsburgh) create a reentry program that reduced rearrests among participants by an estimated 24%, using intensive case management to help people plan for life in the community

before leaving jail, and connecting them to behavioral health services, housing, and other resources once they were back in the community. Funding for the Second Chance Act peaked at \$100 million in 2010, but the program received only \$68 million in each of the last three fiscal years.

- The Justice Reinvestment Initiative provides technical assistance to help states use data-driven approaches to curb corrections spending, reduce recidivism, and improve public safety. The program succeeds the most when it adheres closely to its original goals of shrinking prison and jail populations and investing in communities that are most affected by high levels of incarceration. Arkansas' Justice Reinvestment Initiative's investments in crisis stabilization services, which help people with mental health conditions avoid jail and connect to community-based treatment instead, were a step in the right direction. Federal funding for the Justice Reinvestment Initiative fell from \$27.5 million in fiscal years 2014, 2015, and 2016, to \$25 million in 2017 — which is what the proposed House and Senate funding bills include for 2018.
- The Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program's grants help state and local governments better serve people with mental illness who are involved in the justice system by building collaborations among the corrections, mental health, and substance use treatment systems. One such grant helped the Minnesota Department of Corrections and the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Minnesota create a crisis intervention team within the state prison system to train prison staff to identify mental illness, de-escalate mental health crises, and connect people to mental health resources inside prisons. While a House-approved funding bill included a \$2 million increase for the Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program that would fund the program at \$14 million in 2018, that's still far below the \$50 million that's authorized for the program.

Why Your Auto Insurance Rates are Rising.

This issue is related to the previous issue as it has considerable impact from tourists. While it is not something that one can typically address through legislation in the US House of Representatives, I include it here because it directly impacts family finances and quality of life.

Las Vegas and Reno are places where tourists come to unwind, party, and live a little wilder. The use of alcohol, distracted driving, and tourists have been attributed to the

increase in car accidents in Southern Nevada, which has increased auto insurance rates for most Nevadans.

In a recent interview with agents from State Farm Insurance Companies, I was told that **40% of car accidents in Clark County involve an out-of-state driver.** An additional 35% are caused by Nevada drivers aged 35-54 and the belief is the majority of those accidents can be attributed to cell phone use and distracted driving, which can lead to missing stop signs and deviating out of your lane.

Statistics point to several reasons accidents happen in Nevada, including failure to stay in your lane, failure to yield, failure to stop at stop signs, and unsafe driving. Distracted driving is the number one cause of traffic accidents in Nevada and contributed to more than 3,000 deaths and 391,000 injuries in 2015.

Failure to maintain a lane is a primary cause of serious motor vehicle accidents in Nevada and is seen in urban areas, where sudden lane changes without enough room occur, and in rural areas where drifting across lanes is more common, especially at night. Add in tourists who may not be familiar with Nevada traffic laws, are not familiar with our streets and may be relying on navigation systems on their phones, causing distraction, plus the regular occurrence of drivers gawking, taking photos and videos, and posting to social media while cruising the Las Vegas Strip and other locations, and you have a recipe for accidents.

While we cannot ban drivers from out of state, we can do more to make driving as a visitor in Nevada safer. We can lobby for clearer road signage, increased police presence and ticketing of vehicle infractions, working with rental car companies to better inform renters of the dangers of driving in tourist areas like Las Vegas, Lake Tahoe, and Reno, and pass laws making the use of cell phones more punishable through fines and confiscation. These are state issues, but within Congress we can work to provide funding to address these challenges. We can also look at possible ways for the state to require auto insurance companies not include the risk factors of non-resident drivers in calculating insurance rates. Those costs should be borne by visitors.

Yucca Mountain

Taxpayers are assessed \$800 million annually (\$2.2 million per day) because of the federal government's failure to meet its obligation to dispose of used nuclear fuel that currently resides at nuclear plants across the country. The United States must establish a sustainable national program—supported by dedicated funding—to permanently dispose of this fuel.

The Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 (NWPA) codified the U.S. Department of Energy's responsibility for developing a geologic repository for used nuclear fuel.

In 2002, the president and Congress approved Yucca Mountain in Nevada as the site for this repository. In 2010, however, the DOE shut down the Yucca Mountain project without citing any technical or safety issues. In contrast, decades of scientific study had consistently concluded that the proposed repository could safely protect future generations. At the time, \$12 billion had already been spent on Yucca Mountain and 65,000 metric tons of spent fuel were in temporary storage across 33 states. In 2014, a federal court ordered the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission to complete safety and environmental reviews of the site. While these reviews have since concluded that Yucca Mountain complies with all regulations, a final decision awaits an extensive formal hearing. That hearing can't happen unless Congress provides funding.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has yet to decide whether it will grant the DOE's license application for the Yucca Mountain project. To move forward with either Yucca Mountain or another site, Congress must grant the NRC's and DOE's requests for funding to complete their duties.

Nuclear plants now safely (much safer than 30 years ago) store used fuel in robust pools and then eventually in airtight containers called dry casks. A system of consolidated interim storage (CIS) would enable the DOE to move dry casks from nuclear plants to a consolidated storage facility where it can be more efficiently managed. I support the development of a CIS pilot program in willing host communities and states. Dry casks can last 50 years and then their contents can be repackaged. Therefore, there is no immediate need for a centralized storage facility.

Nationwide, electricity consumers have contributed \$40 billion into the Nuclear Waste Fund. Accounting for expenses to date, federal contributions for defense nuclear waste, and interest earned, \$37 billion remains in the fund. Each year, another \$1.7 billion in interest is added to this principle balance. Therefore, storage solutions must be created, but should be created on nuclear plant facilities to avoid moving. Any future plans to house nuclear waste should be planned at such facilities or on a geographic basis so that nuclear waste does not have to be moved more than 500 miles from its original location. This will help reduce potential accidents in transport and will help state governments work together to find solutions for waste disposal.

I am concerned with the transportation of this waste into Nevada. Since 1970, 70,000 metric tons of spent nuclear fuel have been transported worldwide. This is equivalent to

the amount of spent nuclear fuel that would be shipped into our state. While the routes in Nevada would be public, in the other states the planned routes, dates and times of transport would have been secret for security reasons. Why is Nevada not privy to the same safeguards?

It has been stated that transport would be via rail or truck. If by rail, it comes through the northern corridor before heading south. If by truck, and coming from the East, the route would be across either I-80 to Reno, then south on I-95; down I-5 through Mesquite and the north on I-93; or across I-40 through Arizona and up I-93. The latter two routes would require bringing nuclear waste into Clark County and through Las Vegas, including the congested I-15/I-95 interchange. From California, which has multiple sites that contain waste, the primary routes into Nevada are I-80, I-15, and I-40, all of which present the same problems: nuclear waste would travel through heavily populated areas.

The volcanic tuff at Yucca Mountain is fractured and the movement of water through an aquifer below the waste repository is primarily through these fractures. These faults extend from the planned storage area all the way to the water table 600 to 1,500 ft below the surface. Future water transport from the surface to waste containers is likely to be dominated by fractures. There is evidence that surface water has been transported down through the 700 ft of overburden to the exploratory tunnel at Yucca Mountain and analysts have found that rainwater travels much more rapidly through the layers of the proposed repository than originally believed, and thus that any leaked waste would also reach the groundwater more quickly.

Former Senator Harry Reid, and California Senator Barbara Boxer believed that radioactivity from Yucca Mountain could trickle into underground water supplies that eventually flow to the Colorado River upstream from the aqueduct belonging to the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, which provides significant supplies to about half of all Californians. They warned that stored waste at Yucca Mountain could pollute much of California's and Arizona's water supply for generations to come.

The current plans do not adequately guarantee that waste will not contaminate Nevada's (or any other surrounding states') water table or other elements of the environment.

Culturally, Yucca Mountain was used by the indigenous peoples of North America. The mountain and surrounding lands were central in the lives of the Southern Paiute, Western Shoshone, and Owens Valley Paiute and Shoshone peoples, who shared them for religious ceremonies, resource uses, and social events. Any activities at this facility must take into account preservation of artifacts or ceremonial grounds.

President Trump wants to restart licensing activity at the Yucca Mountain repository and fund an interim storage program. While this would provide jobs, especially trades in which our state's hard-working union members are employed, much must be done to assure residents the project is safe.

Solutions:

In an ideal situation, plans to consolidate the US nuclear waste load at Yucca Mountain, would not occur without the approval of the citizens of Nevada. Even though the site is supposedly ideal for storage, the fact that it is largely opposed by Nevadans and so close to major population areas is cause for concern. The will of the majority of Nevada citizens cannot be ignored and, therefore, I cannot support the current proposals for Yucca Mountain without several additional requirements being met.

Requirements:

If Yucca Mountain is pushed forward by the Federal government, as your voice in Congress I will fight to ensure additional safety measures and guarantees backed by the US Government are incorporated before any waste is allowed to enter the state.

- New and secure transportation routes of rail and roadways are developed, largely across DOD land, and paid for by the Federal government;
- No shipping occurs within 30 miles of any city with a population exceeding 15,000.
- The US Government will guarantee waste will not contaminate Nevada's water table during the operation of the facility and for a period of 300 years after cessation of operation. If water tables are damaged, the government will immediately ensure clean water is made available to impacted communities at no cost. It will reclaim the contaminated water and bring it back to pre-contamination levels.
- Monitoring of water levels will be conducted weekly by the Department of Energy, and an additional third-party firm selected by the State of Nevada. Should test results not align, a third independent firm chosen by the Governor of Nevada will also test.
- Environmental testing (soil, air, water, plant life, animal life, etc.) of the impact of the facility must be conducted yearly at the facility, at 6 points radiating 15 miles from the facility and at 6 points radiating 30 miles from the facility.
- All test results must be made public.

- Construction of new facilities, expansion, or site changes that affect more than 10% of the site would require the consent of the state, local, and tribal governments which may be affected, and the citizens of Nevada, via a statewide ballot initiative.

It's easy to say "*I do not believe Yucca Mountain should be the central repository of nuclear waste for America without additional guarantees and changes to the project*". It's more difficult to suggest what we should do with Yucca Mountain if it is not opened. While I have not toured the facility, from what I have seen in articles and photos, there could be several options for consideration, including:

- A world-class data center which could be developed in conjunction with companies like Switch, Amazon.com, Google, Apple, Microsoft, the Department of Defense, or others;
- A self-contained hydroponic agricultural facility which could create entirely new markets for Nevada-grown fruits and vegetables;
- A central hub for hyperloop, maglev, or other high speed transportation to serve the Western United States;
- Research and development laboratories; or
- Conversion to water storage.

I'm sure there are people smarter than me who can figure out a use for the Yucca Mountain facility. The point is, if it opens, we must be guaranteed it is safe; if it doesn't open, we must utilize the money invested to date to create a use of the complex that will provide good paying jobs for Nevadans.



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To learn more about Bill Townsend's policies and our "12 Big Ideas for Nevada, please visit

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