



COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY & COMMERCE
DEMOCRATS
RANKING MEMBER FRANK PALLONE, JR.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 7, 2016

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Pallone Critical of Another Hearing on Disposal of Nuclear Waste

Highlights Need to Focus on Other Issues Like Safe Drinking Water

Energy and Commerce Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) delivered the following remarks at an Environment and the Economy Subcommittee hearing on “Federal, State, and Local Agreements and Economic Benefits for Spent Nuclear Fuel Disposal”:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Today’s hearing will take a look at the storage of nuclear waste in the United States and the benefits provided to communities hosting waste facilities. I want to welcome all our witnesses, particularly our colleagues on the first panel.

While the safe storage and disposal of spent fuel from our nation’s nuclear reactors is an important matter in the realm of our country’s energy future, this subcommittee has already spent more than enough time on this issue while avoiding other, more pressing issues. In fact, this is the fifth hearing this subcommittee has held during this Congress on the issue of nuclear waste.

With the little time that we have left in this session, we should be spending our time focusing on other pressing matters that are of serious concern to all our constituents and that have not already received such significant hearing time. For example, we could be using today’s hearing time to discuss safe drinking water. Last week, Mr. Tonko and I requested hearings to address meaningful steps to provide the additional tools that state and local governments need to ensure the public is provided with clean and safe drinking water. This committee has simply not done enough to address this issue.

So, here we are again, holding another hearing on the decades-long debate over the disposal of nuclear waste at the Yucca Mountain site. But even in that context, this hearing completely misses the mark. Regardless of your position on this issue, focusing solely on Nevada and Yucca Mountain does not help in moving this conversation forward. I believe this hearing might have been useful had we invited the Department of Energy to discuss its

work on consent-based siting and interim storage. There are also important perspectives we could hear related to applications for storage in Texas and New Mexico that are currently pending before the Nuclear Regulatory Commission as well as related, bipartisan legislation from Mr. Conaway, Mr. Green and others that have been pending before this subcommittee. Unfortunately, instead of looking for a new path forward, all we are doing is pursuing the same old path down the same old rabbit hole with no clear purpose or benefit to the American people.

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