

RIGHTS

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rules" in order to provide DOE with an excuse for latent program progress. He went on to say that DOE has continually blamed other factors for the delay in their progress. Miller said that in 1989, DOE launched a campaign to "convince the Congress that the continuing delays at Yucca Mountain were now the result of Nevada's illegal obstruction of site characterization through abuse of its regulatory authorities."

Contrary to the 1989 DOE claim, a report to Congress in April of 1991 by the U.S. General Accounting Office revealed "Nevada's refusal to provide permits did not affect new on-site construction until February of 1991" due to the fact that the DOE was not ready to start any new work until then.

Now the DOE wants to pass legislation that would

take away Nevada's permitting rights. According to Miller this is in "speculation that Nevada might do something illegal in the future."

Last summer DOE was granted the state permits it needed. While the water permit is still pending, it should not effect the DOE because the department has held an unused permit since 1984.

If the pending legislation in the U.S. Congress is passed, Miller said that this "unnecessary action ... will result in legal action by Nevada, joined by other states, in landmark states' rights cases." Such legislation would effectively strip Nevada of its rights to restrict federal activity in the state. The resulting furor stirred up by such legislation could result in the greatest states' rights legal battle in more than a century.



Bryan Gresh (left) and George Knapp attended the Congressional Hearings on Yucca Mountain

Prominent leaders speak out about Yucca Mountain

by Kimberley McGee

Congressman Bilbray was among several leaders present at the Jan. 10 meeting to discuss the problems of the proposed nuclear waste repository at Yucca Mountain. He expressed reservations regarding the potential site. These reservations began when he toured the potential site in 1980.

According to Bilbray, "The DOE representative referred to the mountain as 'the site.' It was after this trip I determined that the DOE had already made the decision that Yucca Mountain was to be the site."

Bilbray said he believes they are now looking for justification in choosing Yucca Mountain for 70,000 tons of waste. After careful research, Bilbray concluded that, "it was clear to me that this selection did not represent a safe site."

Raymond D. Yowell, chief of the Western Shoshone Nation, was there to remind listeners of the federal government's past exploitation of Indian lands. He compared the offering of the economic benefits the high level nuclear waste repository would bring to the state of Nevada to the diseased blankets given to reservation Indians when they needed warmth. Yowell argued that, though the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 gave rights of full participation equal to state involvement to the Indian tribes (who have lived on and around the mountain for over 10,000 years), notice of the Yucca Mountain study was not given

to the tribe until 1986.

"We hope that the citizens of Nevada will realize what the United States federal government is capable of, as exhibited by the past and present treatment of Indian people," Yowell said.

Civilian Radioactive Waste Management Chief of the Department of Energy John Bartlett said he expects "significant delays" in receiving eight permits to construct a shaft to explore the mountain. Bartlett said the bills before Congress that effect Nevada would close loopholes enabling the state to delay and roadblock the DOE's schedule to begin storing waste at the site by the year 2010.

Gov. Bob Miller questioned the federal government's decision to study one site when Energy Secretary James Watkins has said it makes more sense to study more than one site.

"If it is scientifically more sensible to have multiple sites, then they have an obligation to come forth to Congress and make that point known," Miller said.

"There is a bigger issue at stake here. There is clearly a threat to democracy when states' rights can be crushed aside," Las Vegas Mayor Jan Laverty Jones said.

A compromise may have to be met, with both sides wanting a different piece of the nuclear pie. Kostmayer suggested a compromise stating that if Nevada delays in giving permits then a federal preemption would automatically take effect.

Demonstration turns into feud of misinformation

by Kimberley McGee

A demonstration, including a picket line, was held Jan. 10, in front of the Moyer Student Union in protest against the U.S. House Subcommittee on Energy and Environment hearing. This public hearing was to discuss legislation that is in Congress which could strip Nevada of its oversight rights. However, demonstrators became more involved in heated discussions involving nuclear waste and the potential repository rather than what they were there to protest.

Citizen Alert, a community organization to educate the public on environmental issues, held signs on Maryland Parkway protesting the federal government's intervention.

"They are taking away our state rights," said Tara Pike, a UNLV student. "If they can take away Nevada's rights on this issue, they can take away California or Arizona's rights. It will be a precedent."

Union workers were also holding signs that asked to study the mountain and bring work to Nevada.

"If they are going to pay \$200 million just to study it, the state is \$50 million in the hole now, why don't they put us \$150 million back on top and give us money to pay wages and keep prisons open," argued one union member. "We need to study it and decide if it is going to be here or not."



photo by Kimberley McGee

Members of Citizen Awareness stand up for Nevada's rights.

When asked why they were there and what they were protesting for or against, they began to shout,

"We need work."

"This meeting is against Yucca Mountain."

"I don't know if it's for state's rights for sure."

"All they want to do is strip Nevada of its rights."

"It may bring up to \$8 million into the state, it will benefit the state in many ways."

"Where else can they put it?"

"We need work."

Discussions flared up between union members and members of Citizen Alert. Two points of concern were continu-

ally argued by both sides: the safety of transporting the waste and the fallibility of the repository once it is built. Neither came to any agreement and the horrendous amount of misinformation the public receives was obvious. Some protestors believed the pellets were safe even if exposed and they were mainly worried about the "explosion" that might occur if the cask transporting the waste were to be involved in an accident.

While rallying about nuclear waste and its hazards occurred outside the congressional hearing, inside, the State of Nevada was fighting for its inalienable rights.

Suspect arrested in library thefts

by Tricia Ciaravino

Not everyone took a vacation over the Christmas break. Rolando Gonzalez, 22, was arrested by University Police on Jan. 11, for five reported thefts that occurred in the James R. Dickinson Library during the semester break. Gonzalez has been charged with vagrancy/prowling, possession of stolen property and ex-felon failure to change address. He is being

held at the Clark County Detention Center.

University Police said that one victim has positively identified Gonzalez, who also matched the suspect description of three thefts. They are in the process of doing photo line-ups.

At the time of arrest, Gonzalez was in possession of items belonging to victims of the library thefts University Police said.

Detective Sgt. Lonnie Barrett said thefts such as these can be avoided if students are careful.

"One thing we constantly try to get across is that this is by no means a rare occurrence," he said. "These are crimes of opportunity. He's not the only guy out there doing it. Don't leave property unattended. These guys are very fast and very good at what they do."

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