

United States Senate

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May 20, 2013

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Chairman, Committee on Energy and
Natural Resources
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and
Natural Resources
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Chairwoman, Appropriations Subcommittee
on Energy and Water Development
184 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Ranking Member, Appropriations Subcommittee
on Energy and Water Development
184 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senators Wyden and Murkowski, Feinstein, and Alexander,

I am writing to offer my support for your efforts to craft a responsible, bipartisan proposal to reform the federal government's nuclear waste management program. The *Nuclear Waste Administration Act of 2013* will begin to solve a long-standing problem that has bedeviled policymakers for decades. By creating a new management organization to implement a consent-based approach to siting a storage facility – both for storage and disposal at a permanent repository – we can help ensure that our growing quantities of waste are disposed of safely, securely, and in a timely fashion.

Like so many states, this issue is one of immediate importance to Connecticut. My state is home to three nuclear reactors (two active and one decommissioned) at Millstone Station in Waterford, where approximately 1,700 metric tons of spent fuel are currently stored. Additionally, Connecticut is home to the fully-decommissioned Connecticut Yankee plant in Haddam, where an additional 412 metric tons of waste are stored on-site. These spent fuel rods, most of which are stored in dry-cask facilities, were never designed to remain here in Connecticut for decades on end.

I would also like to express my appreciation for the inclusion of language calling for the priority removal of nuclear waste stranded at permanently shut-down reactor sites such as the Haddam, Connecticut site.

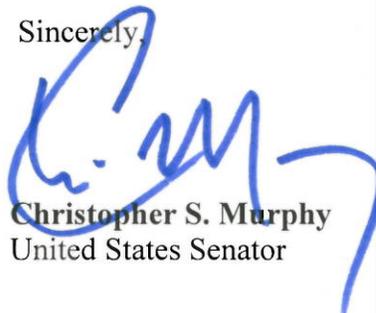
Furthermore, as you well know, every year that passes without a permanent waste solution in place increases liability costs for U.S. taxpayers – some \$2.6 billion and counting. The Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future reported that the liability for U.S. taxpayers would exceed \$20 billion if the federal government begins accepting spent fuel in 2020 and would increase by approximately \$500 million for every year of delay after 2020.

In the wake of the devastating nuclear meltdown at Japan's Fukushima plant in 2011, many worried Americans rightly asked whether our nuclear fleet here at home could fall victim to the same disaster. While we've done some important work to increase safety at our homegrown plants so that a Fukushima-style calamity can't happen here, we still have more work to do. And central to that question is one of storing spent nuclear fuel. For states like Connecticut, with both active and deactivated nuclear plants, it's a problem our nation needs to solve, and solve now.

While reasonable people can disagree about the viability of nuclear power over the long-term here in the U.S., the reality is that we have 102 operating nuclear reactors here in the U.S. (with 5 more under construction), and most are slated to run for decades more. They're producing waste, and we owe it to the American public to take care of that waste in the smartest, safest manner possible. That's why I'm hopeful that, in this session of Congress, both Republicans and Democrats can work together to make this much-needed solution into a real-life success.

Again, I applaud your efforts on this important legislation and look forward to supporting it as it moves through the Senate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris Murphy", is written over the typed name. The signature is stylized and fluid.

Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator