



State of South Carolina

Office of the Governor

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Gov. Sanford Urges Obama Administration, Congress to Keep Yucca Mountain Commitment QUARTER-CENTURY BIPARTISAN PLAN RECENTLY SCRAPPED BY PRESIDENT

Columbia, S.C. - February 16, 2010 - Gov. Mark Sanford today joined members of the South Carolina Congressional Delegation, members of the General Assembly, and other state and local officials in publicly urging President Obama and Congress to recommit to the near quarter-century bipartisan plan for nuclear waste storage in Yucca Mountain.

“We’d respectfully but fervently disagree with the Obama Administration’s decision to abandon the 23-year bipartisan project establishing Yucca Mountain as the nation’s primary permanent nuclear waste storage site,” said Gov. Mark Sanford. “Not only does this spectacularly misguided decision break a decades-long promise made to South Carolina and other states, but it represents the same Chicago-style political patronage that this President has indeed campaigned against.

“The Yucca Mountain project provides a path out for the roughly 4,000 metric tons of nuclear waste temporarily housed at the Savannah River Site and other environmentally-sensitive areas across South Carolina today. Over the last 18 years, South Carolina ratepayers have contributed over \$1.2 billion to the Yucca Mountain project, and the Obama Administration’s recent decision means we will get nothing - literally nothing - in return.

“So for environmental and financial reasons - and to honor the promises made to this state and others - we’re asking the Obama Administration and Congress to recommit to the Yucca Mountain project. And while we join with leaders from Aiken County, Columbia and Washington D.C. to make noise today, the real opportunity to impact this decision going forward lies with South Carolinians from all walks of life and from all corners of the state making their voices heard. On that front I’d ask you to contact your representatives at every level of government - especially those in Washington D.C. - and urge them to use the billions of dollars provided by South Carolinians and others to finish the Yucca Mountain facility and finally provide a secure, permanent storage site for our nation’s nuclear waste.”

PLEASE NOTE: Yucca Mountain Project Fact Sheet Attached.



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Yucca Mountain Fact Sheet:

- When Congress passed the Nuclear Waste Policy Act in 1982, it set the stage for a safe and suitable permanent nuclear waste repository. In 1987, Congress designated Yucca Mountain as the only option for a long-term storage site and this was reaffirmed in 2002.
- Since 1982, the nuclear power industry, through ratepayers living in this and other states, has paid roughly \$7 billion into this nuclear waste fund. South Carolinians alone have contributed more than \$1.2 billion into the fund. Meanwhile, the total spent for the preparation and construction of a permanent storage site at Yucca Mountain has been more than \$10 billion.
- The U.S. Department of Energy already faces \$1.5 billion in court judgments and legal expenses resulting from failure to meet obligations. If the Yucca Mountain Project is shuttered, taxpayers will likely continue to foot the bill to the tune of \$500 million annually just for the Department of Energy to defend and settle ongoing lawsuits.
- Nuclear waste is stored at over 120 locations across the country, with 160 million Americans living within 75 miles of one of these sites. The presence of so many storage facilities throughout the United States presents a potential national security threat because each storage site could be a target for terrorism. Yucca Mountain would help alleviate many of these concerns by consolidating nuclear waste storage in a single, secure location.
- In South Carolina, large amounts of nuclear waste are currently stored at the Savannah River Site (SRS). This presents a potential environmental risk given SRS lies within the Savannah River watershed - home to millions of people.

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