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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
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TO: Mr. Robert E. Browning, Director, HI.WM
FROM: Paul T. Prestholt, Sr. On-Site Licensing Representative
DATE: December 16, 1987
SUBJECT: Newspaper Articles

Please find enclosed more information that appeared in our local newspaper that is of interest.

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cc: Mr. Greg Cook
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Tuesday / Dec. 15, 1987

House nukes Nevada

Panel targets Yucca Mountain as sole dump site

By Ed Koch
SUN Staff Writer

A House of Representatives conference committee proposal Monday to locate the nation's first high-level nuclear dump in Southern Nevada and ignore two other proposed sites drew angry responses from high-ranking state and federal officials.

The House proposal would force studies of only the site at

Yucca Mountain, and abandon all work elsewhere.

It also would abandon a second repository in the East, eliminate regional interim monitored retrievable storage facilities, and drop all study of alternatives, except for the sub-seabed research amendment by Sen. Chiles, R-Nev.

Though Nevada has been strongly considered as a site for

the high-level nuclear waste repository, along with Deaf Smith County, Texas, and Hanford, Wash., this is the first time either the House or Senate has pinpointed Nevada in a proposal as the only site.

The proposal, if adopted, must be voted on by the House and Senate. But the Department of Energy reportedly has been instructed to "characterize" (perform suitability studies on) Yucca

Mountain and abandon work on the other sites.

Monday's news comes on the heels of last week's statement by Sen. Harry Reid, D-Nev., that he had won agreement from Sen. Bennett Johnston, D-La., author of the \$15.9 billion energy and water resources spending bill, to negotiate with House Interior Committee Chairman Morris Udall of Arizona and Commerce Committee

See GOV. BRYAN, Page 4A

Gov. Bryan, Sen. Hecht irate over House dump site proposal

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Chairman John Dingell of Michigan, opponents of Nevada being selected as the dump site.

Reid heralded the negotiation then as "great news for Nevada because those two congressmen are staunch opponents of Johnston's 'Screw Nevada Bill.'"

However, the screw turned the other way Monday, bringing angry responses from Hecht and Gov. Richard Bryan. Attempts to reach Reid for comment at his Washington office were unsuccessful.

"This was a blatant political power play aimed directly at Nevada," Hecht said. "The Democratic leadership of the House has shown its true colors today."

Hecht further opposed the 10-point House proposal now before the House-Senate conferees by calling it "a complete sellout" on the nuclear waste issue.

"The action today strips the camouflage from what has been intended all along," said Bryan. "Anyone with room-temperature IQ knows they have targeted Nevada."

"It's a shameless approach, but at least the House is candid about its intentions."

"This is the most critical development on the nuclear waste issue in Nevada in more than a year."

Bryan said he believes the characterization will show that Yucca Mountain is unsuitable as a site for the dump, but adds he will use litigation, his veto power and "every other remedy and avenue" to stop the dump being located in Nevada.

"It's a no-holds-barred fight and we will wrestle them into the gutter on this one," Bryan said.

Hecht, who attached 17 amendments to the Senate legislation to protect Nevada and continue studying alternatives, said the House proposal abandoned all pretense at scientifically based decision-making.

"They had sold some people a bill of goods that they were going to work against a single site in Nevada, then they put forward this proposal which really sticks it to us," Hecht said.

"I have opposed the bill by Sen. Johnston (chairman of the Senate

Energy Committee) from the beginning, and I still do.

"But this House proposal so unfairly targets Nevada and so completely eliminates the search for scientifically sound alternatives that it makes the seven-month process by the Senate to carefully study and amend the legislation look like a complete waste of time."

Hecht vowed to continue the fight to convince panel members to scrap the proposal.

Panel targets Nevada as first nuke dump site

By Foster Church
Newhouse News Service

WASHINGTON — If investigations prove favorable, Nevada would become the site of the nation's first permanent nuclear waste dump, according to a proposal made Monday by House members of a conference committee.

The Nevada site is at Yucca Mountain, 100 miles northwest of Las Vegas.

The specific nature of the proposal appeared to catch even Sen. J. Bennett Johnston, D-La., by surprise when it was presented to him Monday afternoon.

Johnston is the chief Senate negotiator in the conference committee who has pushed legislation through the Senate that would

appear to make Nevada the choice. But the House position is more specific in its provisions than anything Johnston has proposed and would cite Nevada by name in legislation.

Also, the House proposal does not contain the \$100 million a year package of financial incentives that is a key feature of the Johnston bill.

At least one member of the conference committee acknowledged that the move would be "a terrible thing" for the state.

Johnston during the conference did not actively oppose the more specific language, although he said it "goes against the grain." He said the money package should be retained.

"It is a cruel trick on Christmas Eve to send them the waste and no goodies," he said.

But Rep. Philip R. Sharp, D-Ind., who was

the key House member in devising the package, said it is already taken for granted that under the Johnston bill, Nevada would be the choice and that the House approach is more direct and honest.

"Let's not kid anybody," he said of the Johnston bill. "Nevada was not fooled by this."

Later, Rep. Al Swift, D-Wash., who serves on the conference committee, said the House approach had been hammered together quickly Monday afternoon and called it "lousy legislation and lousy public policy."

But he added that House negotiators have been placed at a disadvantage by Johnston, who shrewdly pushed his legislation through the Senate in such a manner that it appears on the two omnibus budget-balancing bills that are now before Congress.

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