

July 1, 2021

Hon. Jennifer Granholm
Secretary
United States Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Secretary Granholm,

We are strongly opposed to the interim storage of spent nuclear fuel (SNF) and high-level waste (HLW) in New Mexico. There is currently no permanent disposal strategy for SNF and HLW in place at the Department of Energy. This leaves us extremely concerned that “interim” storage sites with initial 40-year leases, like one proposed for Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) licensing in New Mexico, will become the country’s de facto permanent nuclear waste storage facilities. We cannot accept that result.

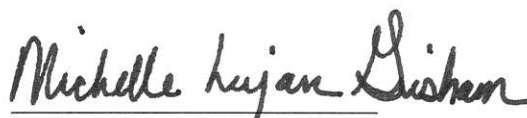
As you have recognized, the consent of those affected is a critical component of any approach to nuclear waste storage. There are currently two pending applications before the NRC for licenses to construct and operate consolidated interim storage facilities (CISFs) - one in Andrews, Texas, and one in Lea County, New Mexico. Without a strategy in place at the Department of Energy for permanent waste disposal, any CISF constructed in or near New Mexico could become a waste storage site that is, in essence, permanent. New Mexico has not and will not consent to such a situation.

New Mexico is proud to host Los Alamos and Sandia National Laboratories and the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant. The people of New Mexico have long been at the forefront of our national security mission and the discovery of nuclear science and technologies. Unfortunately, in some cases, this has resulted in situations that have harmed the health and wellbeing of New Mexicans. We cannot repeat such harms by establishing interim nuclear waste storage sites, especially without a permanent waste disposal strategy. We would welcome collaborative work to establish a coherent, consent-based federal policy on managing and disposing of SNF and HLW, and look forward to engaging in that work with you.

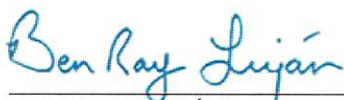
Sincerely,



MARTIN HEINRICH
United States Senator



MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM
New Mexico Governor



BEN RAY LUJÁN
United States Senator



MELANIE A. STANSBURY
United States Representative