



The Public Service Commission State of South Carolina

Jocelyn G. Boyd
Chief Clerk/Administrator
Phone: (803) 896-5133
Fax: (803) 896-5246

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Administrative Department
Phone: (803) 896-5100
Fax: (803) 896-5246

***** FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE *****
June 14, 2012

PSC Commissioner David Wright Speaks Out on Yucca Mountain

South Carolina Public Service Commissioner and National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) President David Wright recently was a featured guest on National Public Radio's (NPR) program on the recent federal appeals court ruling concerning nuclear waste disposal.

For years the federal government has been charging utilities and their customers a fee to pay for a permanent waste storage facility. The monies collected are currently in excess of \$30 billion and sit in the federal Treasury. Commissioner Wright says it is a rip-off. "They [the federal government] have chosen not to do anything," he says. "The federal government has our money; we have their waste."

The federal government promised almost thirty years ago to find a location to bury nuclear waste generated from nuclear power plants. The government began developing a repository at Yucca Mountain in Nevada, but in 2009, President Obama cancelled the project. Almost all of the spent nuclear fuel from power plants is now stored on site, and a federal appeals court has ruled that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) must prove that the on-site storage is truly safe.

Commissioner Wright says Yucca Mountain should be revived, but he says the court ruling in Washington requiring a reassessment of the status quo is one development where environmentalists and utilities can agree. "The fact that we are finally getting some movement — and recognition in the court system is movement — is a positive development," Wright says.

The appeals court says the NRC must do an environmental assessment of all the waste. It did not, however, set a due date.

CONTACT: JOCELYN BOYD, (803) 896-5133

NARUC is a non-profit organization founded in 1889 to represent the interests of state public utility commissions before the three branches of the Federal government. Its members regulate essential utility services, including energy, telecommunications, and water, and are responsible for assuring reliable utility service at fair, just, and reasonable rates.

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