

Responses to Written Questions Submitted by Honorable Dean Heller to Ronald Batory

*Question 1.* Mr. Batory, one of my greatest responsibilities in the Senate is to protect and secure Nevadans. If you are confirmed as the Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration, will rail safety be a priority for you?

Response. I recognize the Federal Railroad Administration has a multitude of responsibilities, but safety will always be my number one priority just as it has been throughout my career.

*Question 2.* One of my priorities is fighting against a proposed Yucca Mountain Waste Repository. This project poses a serious threat to Nevadans and anyone else along the proposed waste transportation routes.

Under the Nuclear Waste Policy Act in the House, the U.S. would be shipping 9,495 rail casks in 2,800 trains, and 2,650 trucks hauling one case each to Yucca Mountain over 50 years.

If the capacity limit at Yucca is more than doubled as has been discussed, the Department of Energy would ship about 21,909 rail casks in about 6,700 trains and 5,025 truck casks to Yucca Mountain. Over a span of 50 years, do you believe it is possible there could be a rail accident with an ensuing radiological release?

Response. Safety is FRA's number one priority, and its efforts to protect hazardous materials routes are undertaken with the highest levels of diligence in conjunction with Federal government partners, state governments, and industry.

The casks (packages) that will be utilized to transport the spent nuclear fuel to Yucca Mountain are specifically designed and built to protect the radioactive material against foreseeable accidents. Conditions for which these packages are designed and tested to withstand include: impact, fire, wetting (submersion), pressure, heat, and cold.

For rail transportation, the cask that will be utilized for these shipments of spent nuclear fuel is known as a Type B transport cask. To date, there has never been a transportation accident in which one of these casks containing spent nuclear fuel has been breached or has leaked radioactive material here in the USA, or internationally.

If confirmed, you have my assurance that members of FRA's Hazardous Materials Division will continue to work actively with the Department of Energy on the planning and preparation of these future moves. Such moves would be executed with the utmost caution.