

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

TRIBUTE TO JERRY RICH

HON. JOHNNY ISAKSON

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 9, 2002

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend an American who exemplifies the opportunities and possibilities our free enterprise system brings to all Americans and, like so many Americans, an individual who has taken his success and its rewards and found a way to share it in a meaningful way.

I am pleased to rise today and commend Mr. Jerry Rich of Sugar Grove, Illinois, and I am very pleased to be joined by Speaker DENNIS HASTERT in this tribute. As the age of technology dawned in the 1970s, Jerry Rich applied his entrepreneurial spirit and personal dedication to develop a technology system capable of providing those in the financial markets with the ability to monitor disparate information on a single screen. Jerry Rich's innovation is now shared in the capital markets and on Wall Street by everyone. His innovation and success ultimately led to a merger of his company with Reuters and retirement from his business in 1988. But like so many Americans, Jerry Rich applied his success to his passion, and his passion to benefit America's youth.

Jerry Rich bought eight farms and combined them into what is now known as Sugar Grove Estate. A passionate golfer, Jerry set out to build and develop a unique golf course, and unique it is. Originally nine holes with three separate tees, Rich Harvest Links is now an eighteen-hole championship golf course, ranked by Golf Magazine as one of the top ten new private golf courses in America. Rich Harvest Acres has a staff of forty-five attending to this challenging 7,446-yard, par 72 golf course. While Rich Harvest Links is one of the most exclusive in America, currently with twenty-five members and a plan for twenty-five more in the future, it also is a golf course that Jerry Rich shares with amateur golfers in the great State of Illinois.

Jerry is very active in the youth program, "Hook a Kid on Golf," which introduces youths to the game of golf and has spread to twenty-nine states in America and Canada. He started a foundation that funds the operation for "Hook a Kid on Golf" in Illinois where, last year alone, one thousand five hundred children attended five-day clinics.

Jerry Rich embodies everything the American entrepreneurial spirit represents. Throughout his life he has taken risks, applied knowledge, sought innovation and built a business. From its success he has been rewarded, and with that success he shared with others. This is what America is all about, and Rich Harvest Links is not just a tribute to golf, but a tribute to a great man of Illinois who cares: Jerry Rich.

YUCCA MOUNTAIN REPOSITORY SITE APPROVAL ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 8, 2002

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, after careful consideration, I have decided that I cannot support this resolution.

The resolution would approve the site at Yucca Mountain, Nevada, for a high-level nuclear waste repository. This is the site with which the Governor of Nevada has submitted a notice of disapproval under the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982, as amended. Congressional approval of the joint resolution would override the governor's objections and would endorse the decision of the President approving the site. Under the law, the Energy Department would then be required to request the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to issue a construction license for the repository.

In my opinion, to vote for the resolution would mean voting to make a premature decision, based on incomplete science and without adequate consideration of all the important factors involved. I do not think that would be a responsible course or in the public interest.

The President's decision evidently was based on the recommendation of Energy Secretary Abraham, who said that he was convinced that sound science supports the Yucca Mountain site.

In reaching that conclusion the Secretary evidently relied on the Energy Department's comprehensive performance assessment. However, in recent months three other agencies have issued reports that cast serious doubt on that conclusion.

Last September, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's Advisory Committee on Nuclear Waste reported that, among other things, the system-performance assessment used assumptions that "mask a realistic assessment of risk" and that its analyses were "assumption-based, not evidence-supported."

Then, in December, the General Accounting Office identified more than 290 relevant issues, including such matters as the geologic integrity of the site and the flow of water through the site, and concluded that "DOE will not be able to submit an acceptable application [to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission] within the express statutory time frame for several years because it will take that long to resolve many technical issues."

In January of this year, the Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board reported that it had "limited confidence in current performance estimates" underlying the Energy Department's recommendation and that it considered the technical bases for those estimates to be "weak to moderate"—far from a ringing endorsement, especially for a project of such scope and importance.

Those are not the only analyses that give me pause. Another appeared just last month

in a Science magazine article by Rodney C. Ewing, a faculty member at the University of Michigan, and Allison McFarlane, who is in the Security Studies Program at MIT. In the article, Dr. Ewing and Dr. McFarlane note that "the passive properties of the [Yucca Mountain] repository site do not provide a long-term barrier to radionuclide release." That means there will be a need to rely on other things—engineering fixes—to prevent such releases. They say that the choice of Yucca Mountain as a repository site "is based on an unsound engineering strategy and poor use of present understanding of the properties of spent nuclear fuel," and that "there are other unresolved technical issues," including "the continuing controversy over the frequency and impact of volcanic activity" at Yucca Mountain.

And they conclude that "a project of this importance, which has gone on for 20 years, should not go forward until the relevant scientific issues have been thoughtfully addressed . . . To move ahead without first addressing the outstanding scientific issues will only continue to marginalize the role of science and detract from the credibility of the DOE effort."

I agree with that conclusion, which is why I am troubled by what seems to be a rush to judgment on the part of the Administration.

I do think that there are very important considerations that argue in favor of establishing a repository for the kind of high-level nuclear wastes that are at issue here, particularly the potential role of such a repository for disposition of military wastes such as spent fuel from our Navy's nuclear-powered vessels and in connection with our efforts to avoid proliferation of nuclear weapons.

However, I think questions about Yucca Mountain in the context of homeland security are not clear-cut.

On the one hand, the Administration points to the fact that more than 161 million Americans now live within 75 miles of a site where highly radioactive materials are stored and that while these facilities "should be able to withstand current terrorist threats . . . that may not remain the case in the future," as Secretary Abraham wrote in his February 14th letter to the President, and would be "better secured . . . at Yucca Mountain, on federal land, far from population centers, that can withstand an attack well beyond any that is reasonably conceivable."

On the other hand, there is something to be said for the argument that transporting large quantities of such materials over long distances would multiply the current opportunities for terrorist attacks because the vehicles doing the transporting would be attractive targets that could not always be totally concealed.

Further, I am not convinced that the Administration has adequately made the case that Yucca Mountain is the right site for such a repository or that "a repository at Yucca Mountain is indispensable" for our energy security, as Secretary Abraham also claims in his February 14th letter to the President.

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