

remain part of the energy mix. America needs nuclear power to maintain our secure, reliable, and affordable supplies of electricity. At the same time, nuclear power allows the Nation to directly and effectively address increasingly stringent air quality requirements.

I challenge my colleagues in the Chamber, on both sides of the aisle, to get this bill done. We spent a lot of time on it the year before last. We ran into the blue slip problem with the House. We will not have that problem with this bill.

The citizens in these communities are looking for us to act. The nuclear industry had already committed to the Federal Government about \$15 billion toward building the facility by 1998. The industry has continued to pay between \$40 and \$80 billion in fees for storage of this spent fuel.

It is time for the Federal Government to honor its commitment to the American people and to the power community. It is time for the Federal Government to protect these 100 communities to ensure that the Federal Government meets its commitment to States and electricity consumers. The 106th Congress must mandate completion of this program—a program that gives the Federal Government title to waste currently stored on-site at facilities across the Nation, a site for permanent disposal, and a transportation infrastructure to safely move the used fuel from plants to the storage facility.

Again, I have had people express concerns to me about how this can be done safely. I actually took the time to look at the equipment that is used to move this spent fuel in other countries, particularly in France, and they have done it safely, without a single incident—no problem ever. Again, they are doing it in France. Can't we do it in America?

Our foot dragging is unfortunate. It is unacceptable. Clearly, we must move this legislation. The only remedy to stop the delays—and it is a timely action—is for the Senate to consider this in the 106th Congress.

Let's move forward and get this legislation done.

Madam President, I see Senator REID is here.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—
S. 1287

Mr. LOTT. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the nuclear waste bill, S. 1287, following passage of the bankruptcy bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. REID. Madam President, reserving the right to object, I say to my friend, the majority leader, that on the surface it does appear that something needs to be done with nuclear waste. If you get under the surface, of course, there should be something done.

I am not going to give a long dissertation now on nuclear waste. We have had that in the past. But the fact of the matter is, really what should happen is, it should stay where it is. That is what the scientists say. It could be safely stored on site in dry cast storage containment, as is done in Calvert Cliffs, MD, for the next 100 years.

The nuclear power industry, which has created this fiasco, wants someone else to clean up their mess. They want it out of their hands. They want their hands washed of it.

The fact of the matter is, we are looking at this legislation. Senator MURKOWSKI is trying to come up with some alternative. I have been told by the minority on the Energy Committee that if that is the case, he is going to try to change the legislation that is now before this body. That is, the legislation now before this body would take the Environmental Protection Agency out of the mix; that is, the Environmental Protection Agency would not be setting the standards for Yucca Mountain, but it would be given to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, which, in fact, is the one that does licensing. That really is literally having the fox guard the hen house.

In this legislation, we simply want things to remain the way they are—have the Environmental Protection Agency set the standards. But we understand there is a lot of agitation by the very powerful nuclear power industry, that wants to move this forward in spite of the fact that it could damage the country. We understand that. We hope good sense will prevail because the President has said he will veto this legislation. I think that is the reason Senator MURKOWSKI, the chairman of the committee, wants to come up with something that is going to be such that it will not create a fight here on the floor.

As the majority leader knows, we have enough votes to sustain a Presidential veto. We hope we will not get to the point where that is necessary.

Will the leader again state what the request is?

Mr. LOTT. The consent would be for the Senate to proceed to the nuclear waste bill, S. 1287, following passage of the bankruptcy bill.

Mr. REID. I object to that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. LOTT. I understood the Senator would object.

I think it is very important, though, that we move this legislation forward.

NUCLEAR WASTE POLICY AMENDMENTS ACT OF 1999—MOTION TO PROCEED

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. LOTT. Having heard the objection then, I move to proceed to S. 1287 and send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 180, S. 1287, the Nuclear Waste Amendments Act of 1999:

Trent Lott, Frank H. Murkowski, Jim Bunning, Thad Cochran, Kay Bailey Hutchison, Mike Crapo, Richard Shelby, Larry E. Craig, Craig Thomas, Judd Gregg, Jeff Sessions, Bob Smith of New Hampshire, Phil Gramm, Slade Gorton, Tim Hutchinson, and Don Nickles.

Mr. LOTT. Madam President, the cloture vote will occur on Wednesday, February 2. I will notify Members when the time has been established. Of course, I will confer with the Democratic leadership about the exact time.

In the meantime, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived and the cloture vote occur immediately following the passage of the bankruptcy bill after the use or yielding back of 30 minutes of debate time, equally divided in the usual form.

Mr. REID. Reserving the right to object to that request of the leader, I am confident that request will be granted. I cannot do it right now, but I am sure we will be able to—my colleague from Nevada is on an airplane. I want to be able to confer with him. I think we will be able to do that without a problem.

Mr. LOTT. We appreciate that and look forward to conferring with the Senator on that. I will talk to Senator MURKOWSKI, too, about any plans he may have. I know he wants to get this done. But he is also sensitive to concerns that exist.

We will continue to work to find a way to make this happen.

Mr. REID. Mr. Leader, if I could say this, too. I say about Senator MURKOWSKI, we have been real adversaries on this issue, but I have to say that he has been a total gentleman about everything he has done on this. As bitter as are some of the pills he has asked us to swallow, the fact of the matter is he has never tried to surprise me. He has been very open and above board. I appreciate that very much about Senator MURKOWSKI.

Mr. LOTT. Madam President, we should go ahead and clarify, there was not objection to this?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the request?

Mr. REID. I say to my friend, I do not know how, procedurally, we are going to go about doing this. I have to talk to Senator BRYAN before I can allow this to go forward. I cannot do that right now. So I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.