

Feds plan nuke waste depot on Indian land

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A controversy concerning radioactive waste storage has developed at the Goshute Indian Reservation in Skull Valley, Utah.

The dispute involves a Nuclear Regulatory Commission plan to create the nation's only private nuclear waste storage facility on the Indian reservation, located near an Air Force bombing range, The Christian Science Monitor reported Thursday.

The plan is being opposed by Utah's entire congressional delegation, the state's governor and various environmentalists.

"Our position is this represents public policy at its absolute worst," Mike Lee, general counsel to Utah Gov. Jon Huntsman Jr. told the Monitor. "What these people want to do is take spent nuclear fuel and put it above ground in casks in a valley that's located 40 miles immediately upwind from Utah's only population center. To make matters much worse, this aboveground, open-air facility lies immediately under the low-altitude flight path of 7,000 F-16s a year en route to a bombing range."

But the chairman of the reservation, Leon Bear, has been seeking ways to support his tribe and saw the project as a source of badly needed income.

"What do they think we can do, sell bottled water?" Bear asked.

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