

The Sunday Fix

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CHRIS CILLIZZA AND SHAILLAGH MURRAY

Proposed Nuclear Waste Site Could Be Toxic Issue for Some Candidates

Joining ethanol in the pantheon of complex energy issues that 2008 presidential candidates must address is another: Yucca Mountain, the proposed burial site for nuclear waste in the Nevada desert.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada has vowed to thwart plans to deposit waste at Yucca as long as he's in office, but the issue remains a big one with Nevada voters. Now that the state has moved its 2008 caucuses near the front of the nominating calendar, Yucca is an issue that would-be presidents can't ignore — and a few of the candidates are squirming. At the top of the list: former senator John

Edwards (D-N.C.), who opposed Yucca in 2000, supported it in 2002 and now opposes it again.

Candidates who weren't around for the Senate's 2002 debate have more wiggle room on the issue, a tricky one because the waste is now stored around the country — including in another early-primary state, South Carolina, home to an estimated 37 million gallons of liquid waste at the Savannah River Site.

What follows is a survey of the 2008 field, from those like Edwards, who have — shall we say — a "mixed" record on the issue, to the stalwart opponents and one proponent of making Yucca a nuclear waste destination.

Presidential Funding Cheat Sheet

By the end of today, everyone running for president in 2008 will have filed a complete record with the Federal Election Commission of the money they raised and spent over the first three months of the year. Amid the numbing flood of numbers, some matter more than others. Here's The Fix's cheat sheet on what to watch for:

- **Burn rate.** Remember the old adage, "It takes money to make money"? Well, it's particularly true in politics, where candidates scream about the tens of millions they raised in the first quarter but whisper when it comes to how much they spent to raise it. Political pros call it the "burn rate"; subtract the total amount raised from the total amount spent to raise it. High burn rate = bad.
- **Primary vs. general election donations.** With nearly every top-tier candidate forgoing public financing, their reports will include not only money collected for the primary but also cash they've gathered for the general election. Under campaign finance rules, an individual can donate \$2,300 for the primary and \$2,300 more for the general election. The catch? A candidate can't spend general election contributions unless and until he or she becomes the nominee.
- **Staff and consultant costs.** During the 2000 presidential election, it seemed as though Al Gore had every consultant in the Democratic Party on retainer. George W. Bush, by contrast, sought to keep costs low by depending on a relatively small group of professional advisers. Keep an eye on which campaigns are the most top-heavy in terms of staff salaries and consultant costs; it's a good indicator of where there may be too many cooks in the kitchen.

R&B Primary

Celebrity endorsements are all the rage in politics these days. Take soulful songstress Macy Gray, who in the liner notes for her new album, "Big," writes "Elect Barack Obama in 2008." Spelling aside (it's "B-A-R-A-C-K"), the decision by the pop star to weigh in on the presidential race speaks volumes about how politics somehow became cool again. Need more evidence? Rapper/producer Timbaland opened up his Florida home last month for a fundraiser for Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-N.Y.).



...and is yours so love... Elect Barack Obama in 2008.

COUNTDOWN

15 days: Oregon Rep. Peter DeFazio (D) has said he will decide sometime next month whether to challenge Sen. Gordon Smith (R) in 2008. After initially ruling out a bid, DeFazio is reluctantly reconsidering a run. Wonder if it had anything to do with the poll commissioned by the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee that showed DeFazio ahead of Smith 42 percent to 38 percent?

116 days: The butter cow, fried Oreos and presidential candidates as far as the eye can see. Yup, it's the Iowa State Fair! The festivities run for 11 days starting Aug. 9.

"IMPOLITIC"



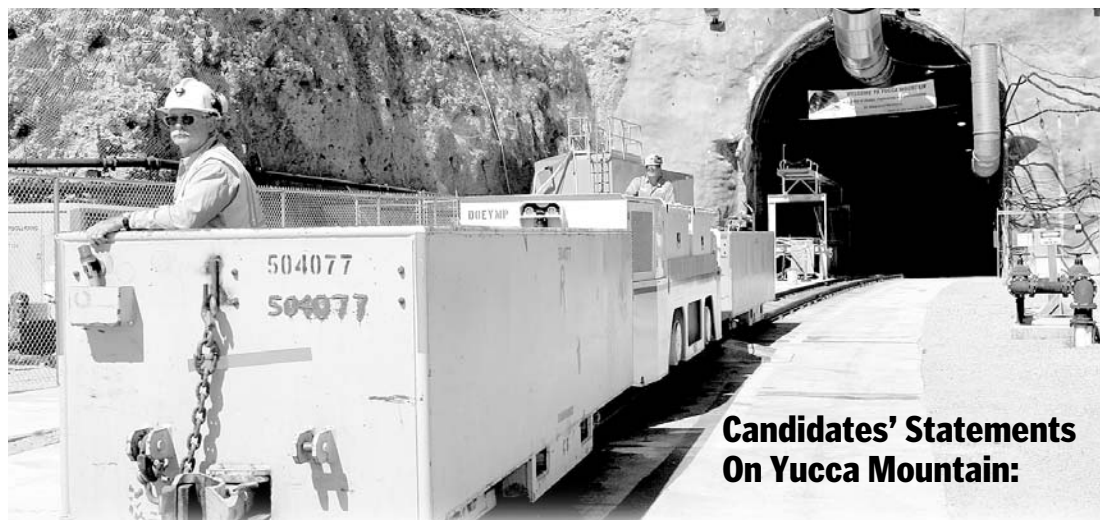
CHARLES DHARAPAK — ASSOCIATED PRESS

"I thought you committed to me a year ago."

— Sen. Joe Biden (D-Del.) to radio host Don Imus on March 26

"No, I don't want his endorsement."

— Biden on Imus on April 11



Candidates' Statements On Yucca Mountain:

The flip-flopers

■ John Edwards

Then: "Unless we're going to close down nuclear plants, we have to find someplace to put the waste." (July 8, 2002)

Now: "At this point in time, it does not make sense to do Yucca Mountain." ("Meet the Press," Feb. 4)

■ Chris Dodd

Then: "Dodd supports moving nuclear waste out of Connecticut to Yucca Mountain site." (News release headline, July 9, 2002)

Now: "I have grown more suspicious of the security implications ... the Yucca Mountain site should not be licensed." (April 12 statement)

The steady foes

■ Hillary Clinton

Then: "There are too many uncertainties associated with proceeding now." (News release, July 9, 2002)

Now: "I am totally against using Yucca Mountain. Period." (Las Vegas Sun interview, March 23)

■ Joe Biden

Then: "I have serious concerns not only about the long-term environmental and security problems ... but the very real dangers posed by shipping 77,000 tons of high-level nuclear waste through at least 43 states." (News release, July 9, 2002)

Now: "I've been deeply involved with Yucca Mountain over the years." (Las Vegas Sun, March 23)

The staunch supporter

■ John McCain

Then: Supported the site as a response to "one of the most important environmental, health and public safety issues for the American people." (Arizona Republic, July 10, 2002)

Now: "I am for Yucca Mountain. I'm for storage facilities. It's a lot better than sitting outside power plants all over America." (Deseret Morning News, March 2)

PHOTO BY ISAAC BREKKEN — ASSOCIATED PRESS

CORRECTIONS

■ An April 1 Page One article about illicit logging in Asia reported that Armstrong Floor Products of Pennsylvania sells flooring made from tropical merbau wood with a label typically saying it is made in the United States and without disclosing that the wood came from Southeast Asia. Armstrong's merbau flooring is actually made in Indonesia and labeled as such, and the company says it has taken steps to ensure the

wood is harvested legally. Additionally, the article should have included a statement from Armstrong that 95.1 percent of the wood it uses in its products is grown in the United States and Canada.

■ A book signing by Tim Gunn at the Penn Quarter Olsson's was rescheduled after today's Sunday Source was printed. The signing is to take place at 3 p.m. Friday.

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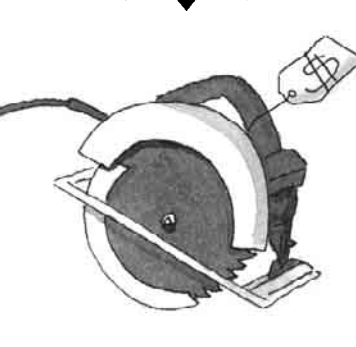
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