

Spent Fuel Political Landscape

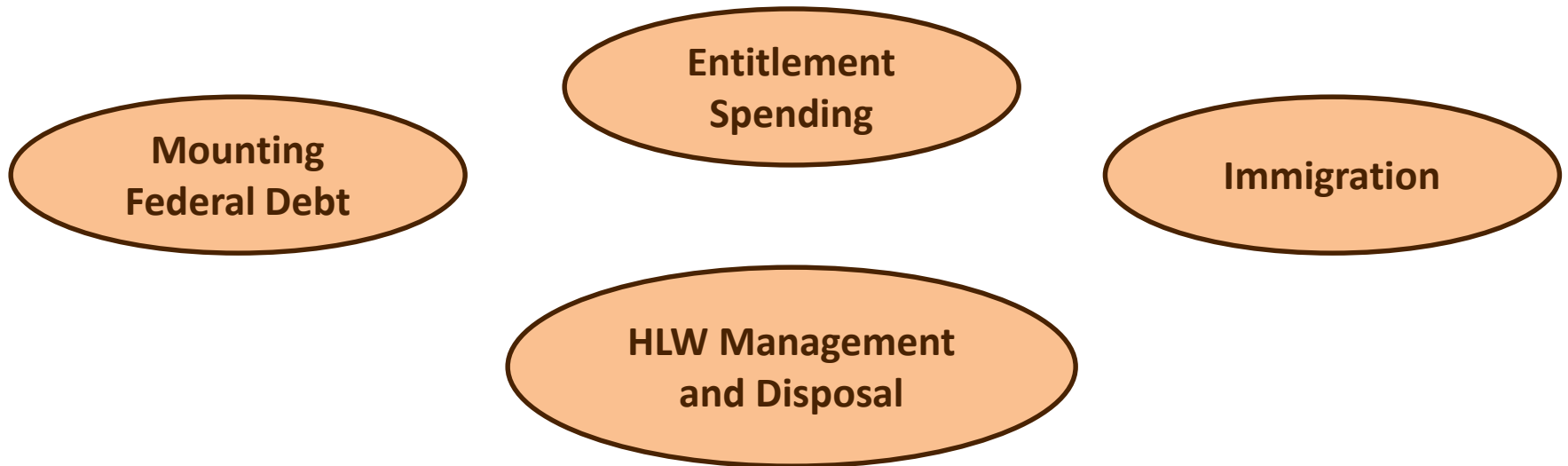
An unfortunate part of the bigger picture

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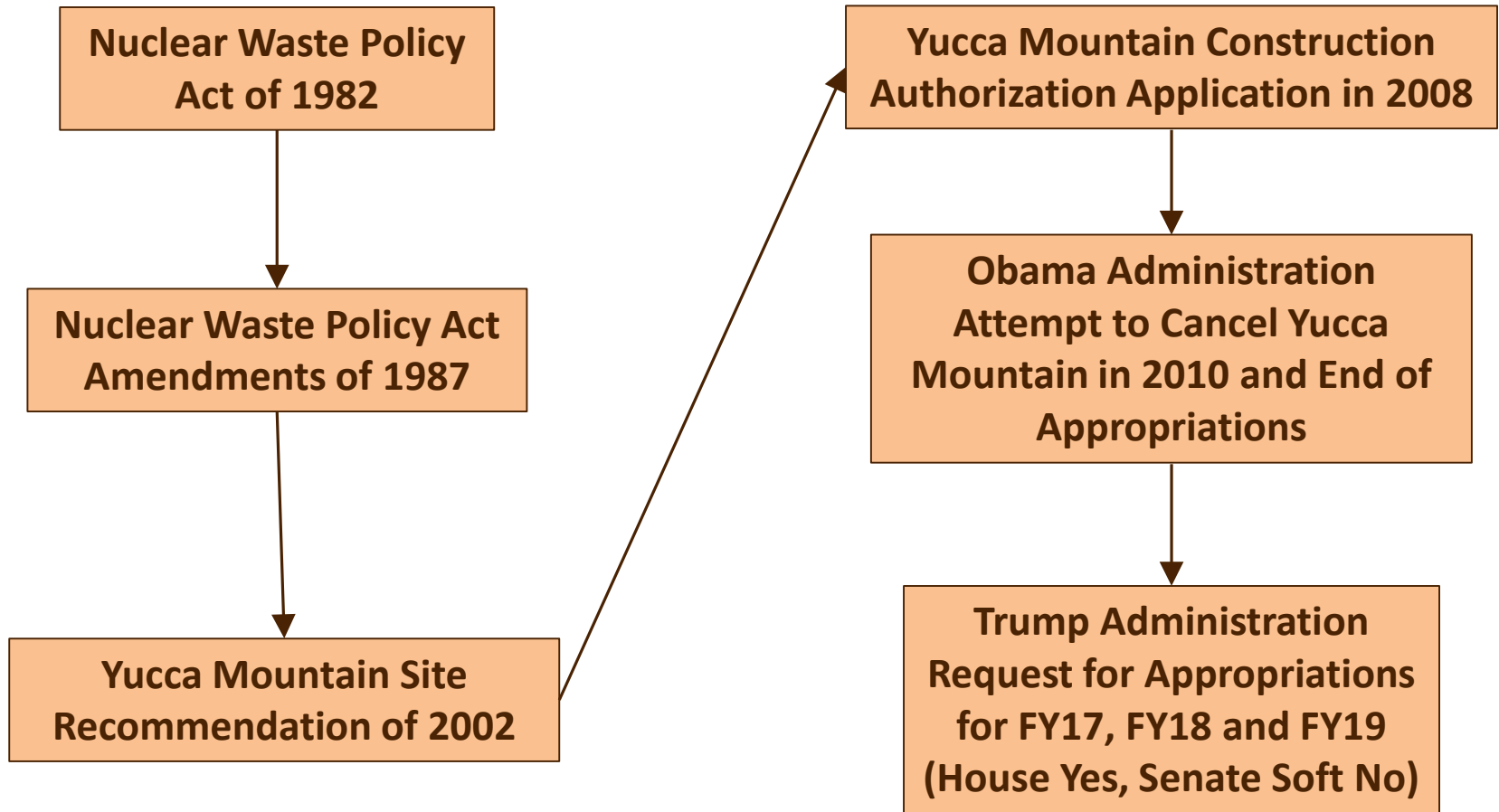
Current Political Landscape - General

- Hyper partisanship
- Political gain outweighs country's long-term needs
- Governance by appropriations and executive action



Note: The acronym HLW refers collectively to highly radioactive waste from reprocessing and spent nuclear fuel.

HLW - How We Got Here



Recent Political Landscape - HLW

- U.S. policy is for disposal of HLW in a geologic repository at Yucca Mountain
- 115th Congress (2017-2019)
 - Administration support for Yucca Mountain
 - House: Bipartisan support for appropriations for Yucca Mountain; passed Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act
 - Senate: Bipartisan support for appropriations for consolidated interim storage (CIS); no authorizing accomplishments
 - “Grand Compromise” of Yucca Mountain and CIS never materialized

Current Political Landscape - HLW

- 116th Congress: House under Democratic control
 - Many new faces
 - Less influence for Yucca Mountain proponent Rep. John Shimkus (R-IL)
 - Democratic leadership attention focused elsewhere
 - Rep. Susie Lee (D-NV) stated she obtained assurances that Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) would oppose Yucca Mountain

Current Political Landscape – HLW (cont.)

- 116th Congress: Senate
 - Some new faces
 - Roadblock to Senate Republican leadership support for Yucca Mountain removed when Senator Heller (R-NV) lost his re-election bid
 - Some Senate Democrats inclined to oppose Yucca Mountain due to opposition from the two Democratic Nevada senators
 - Appropriations Energy Subcommittee Chair Senator Alexander (R-TN) reiterated support for Yucca Mountain and getting something done on HLW

FY2020 Appropriations

- Continued Trump Administration support for Yucca Mountain anticipated
- Senate appropriators could support funding for both Yucca Mountain and CIS
- Unclear how much House Democratic support for Yucca Mountain will continue
- Backdrop of mixed government and overall gridlock – will any appropriations bills be passed?

Observations

- Short-term political considerations continue to outweigh long-term needs of the country
- Less focus on HLW
- Some incentives for political action
 - Desire to move spent fuel out of state (e.g., California)
 - Concern that HLW impasse may stymie advanced nuclear energy systems
 - Pressure from communities with defense HLW

Conclusions

- “Grand Compromise” in appropriations (Yucca Mountain plus CIS) remains best hope for near-term progress
- Stalemate can continue indefinitely but Yucca Mountain viability may not

Recommendations

- Educate new members of Congress
- Raise the stakes
- Hold Yucca Mountain opponents accountable
- Plan B?