

1 A MEMORIAL

2 REQUESTING THE NEW MEXICO CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO
3 CONTINUE TO SUPPORT AMENDMENTS TO EXPAND COMPENSATION UNDER
4 THE FEDERAL RADIATION EXPOSURE COMPENSATION ACT FOR
5 INDIVIDUALS EXPOSED TO RADIATION.

6
7 WHEREAS, from 1945 to 1962, the United States government
8 implemented a massive program of conducting hundreds of
9 atmospheric nuclear weapons development tests; and

10 WHEREAS, to provide uranium for the atmospheric nuclear
11 testing being carried out, the United States undertook
12 uranium mining and processing in many areas, especially in
13 New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, Montana, Nevada and Utah; and

14 WHEREAS, individuals in New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado,
15 Montana, Nevada, Utah and elsewhere were hired to work in the
16 uranium mines and in uranium processing; and

17 WHEREAS, large uranium deposits were found on or near
18 the Navajo Nation, and many Navajo people were employed to
19 work in the mines; and

20 WHEREAS, many thousands of individuals have been exposed
21 to radiation in large doses through atmospheric nuclear
22 weapons testing or through employment in uranium mining and
23 processing; and

24 WHEREAS, radiation exposure has been linked to a number
25 of serious illnesses in exposed individuals, including

1 cancers; gastrointestinal, neurological and blood disorders;
2 and other conditions leading to the debilitation or death of
3 individuals exposed to radiation; and

4 WHEREAS, in 1990, the United States congress passed the
5 Radiation Exposure Compensation Act; and

6 WHEREAS, the federal Radiation Exposure Compensation Act
7 was designed to provide some compensation to those exposed to
8 radiation through certain atmospheric nuclear weapons tests
9 and uranium mining and processing operations; and

10 WHEREAS, the federal Radiation Exposure Compensation Act
11 designated certain areas of Arizona and Utah that were deemed
12 to have been downwind of atmospheric nuclear weapons testing
13 as official downwind areas for which compensation would be
14 provided; and

15 WHEREAS, the federal Radiation Exposure Compensation Act
16 limited compensation for uranium miners, millers and haulers
17 to those workers whom the uranium industry employed before
18 January 1, 1972; and

19 WHEREAS, the amount of monetary compensation awarded
20 pursuant to the federal Radiation Exposure Compensation Act
21 widely differs according to whether an individual was exposed
22 due to being in a downwind area or according to the type of
23 uranium industry-related work the individual performed; and

24 WHEREAS, under the strict guidelines of the Radiation
25 Exposure Compensation Act, many individuals who have lived

1 downwind from test sites outside of Arizona, Nevada and Utah
2 or who worked in the uranium industry have been left with no
3 remedy for their radiation exposure; and

4 WHEREAS, in 2015, United States Representative Ben R.
5 Lujan introduced House Resolution 994 and United States
6 Senators Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich signed on to Senate
7 Bill 331 to extend compensation to uranium workers who were
8 exposed from 1972 to 1990; and

9 WHEREAS, House Resolution 994 and Senate Bill 331 also
10 proposed expanding the list of eligible workers to include
11 uranium core drillers, in addition to uranium miners, millers
12 and ore transporters, as employees potentially eligible for
13 federal Radiation Exposure Compensation Act compensation; and

14 WHEREAS, House Resolution 994 and Senate Bill 331 would
15 have added to the list of downwind areas in New Mexico,
16 Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada and Utah, as well
17 as in the United States territory of Guam; and

18 WHEREAS, House Resolution 994 and Senate Bill 331 would
19 have made all qualifying claims eligible for one hundred
20 fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000) of compensation, regardless
21 of whether the claimants were exposed as miners, millers, ore
22 transporters, on-site employees or individuals living in a
23 downwind area; and

24 WHEREAS, House Resolution 994 and Senate Bill 331 would
25 have expanded the types of medical conditions that render

1 claimants eligible for compensation pursuant to the federal
2 Radiation Exposure Compensation Act; and

3 WHEREAS, members of New Mexico's congressional
4 delegation are continuing their previous efforts to expand
5 and improve compensation for individuals exposed to
6 radiation; and

7 WHEREAS, on January 24, 2017, United States Senate Bill
8 197, a bill to amend the federal Radiation Exposure
9 Compensation Act to improve compensation for workers involved
10 in uranium mining, and for other purposes, was introduced;
11 and

12 WHEREAS, Senators Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich
13 cosponsored the bill;

14 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
15 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the New
16 Mexico congressional delegation be requested to continue to
17 support proposed federal legislation to expand and improve
18 compensation under the federal Radiation Exposure
19 Compensation Act; and

20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
21 transmitted to members of the New Mexico congressional
22 delegation.