A MEMORIAL

PROCLAIMING FEBRUARY 15, 2019 "URANIUM WORKERS DAY" IN THE
SENATE.

WHEREAS, the Grants mineral belt, situated between
Shiprock and the Pueblo of Laguna, contains one of the world's
richest uranium deposits; and

WHEREAS, during a thirty-year period beginning in 1948,
the Grants mineral belt produced more uranium than any other
district in the world and accounted for one-third of all of the
uranium produced in the United States during that period; and

WHEREAS, the history of uranium mining has involved small
"mom and pop" surface and underground mines and large-scale
commercial surface and underground mines; and

WHEREAS, the Navajo Nation has identified over five
hundred abandoned uranium mines on tribal lands; and

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1   WHEREAS, the mining and minerals division of the energy,

2   minerals and natural resources department has identified nearly

3   six hundred mine and exploration sites in McKinley, Cibola and

4   Sandoval counties alone; and

5   WHEREAS, a recent inventory study identified two hundred

6   fifty-nine uranium mine sites in New Mexico and of these, one

7   hundred thirty-seven have no record of any reclamation; and

8   WHEREAS, in addition to uranium mines, mills used to

9   process ore to yellowcake were constructed and operated at

10   seven sites in New Mexico; and

11   WHEREAS, the United States department of energy reports

12   that nearly twelve thousand persons were employed in the

13   uranium mining and milling industry in the United States in

14   1980; and

15   WHEREAS, the energy, minerals and natural resources

16   department estimates that about seven thousand people were

17   employed in the uranium industry in New Mexico in 1978, the

18   record year for uranium production in the state; and

19   WHEREAS, limited studies on the health risks to miners

20   from uranium exposure showed that Navajo uranium miners were

21   three times more likely to die from lung cancer than the United

22   States average; and

23   WHEREAS, uranium miners were five times more likely to

24   develop lung cancer than the general population; and

25   WHEREAS, exposure to dust, gases, exhaust and fumes as

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1   well as the lack of protective clothing and safety measures,

2   such as miners coming in contact with water from the mine

3   ceilings or eating their lunches while at work, can result in

4   non-malignant and malignant respiratory diseases; and

5   WHEREAS, an increased risk for kidney disease,

6   hypertension and autoimmune diseases may have occurred from

7   mining-era exposures and environmental legacy exposures; and

8   WHEREAS, the negative effects of uranium mining and

9   milling and the health impacts from working in a mine are

10 stressors for individuals and families; and

11   WHEREAS, many former workers and their families continue

12 to live in communities that have not been adequately cleaned up

13 or reclaimed and, as a result, may experience continued

14 exposure to harmful contamination in the air and environment;

15   NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE

16 OF NEW MEXICO that, in recognition of the contributions of

17 uranium workers and in recognition of the ongoing health and

18 environmental impacts as a result of historical uranium

19 industrial operations in New Mexico, February 15, 2019 be

20 designated "Uranium Workers Day" in the senate; and

21   BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be

22 transmitted to members of the New Mexico congressional

23 delegation, the governor of the Pueblo of Laguna, the governor

24 of the Pueblo of Acoma, the president of the Navajo Nation and

25 the county commissioners of Cibola, Sandoval and McKinley

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