

1 A MEMORIAL

2 REQUESTING THE NEW MEXICO CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO SUPPORT  
3 LEGISLATION TO EXPAND COMPENSATION UNDER THE FEDERAL  
4 RADIATION EXPOSURE COMPENSATION ACT FOR INDIVIDUALS EXPOSED  
5 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, thousands of individuals have been exposed to  
21 radiation in large doses through atmospheric nuclear weapons  
22 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 federal 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 employed by the uranium industry before  
18 January 1, 1972; and

19 WHEREAS, the amount of monetary compensation awarded  
20 pursuant to the federal Radiation Exposure Compensation Act  
21 differs widely 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 federal  
25 Radiation Exposure Compensation Act, many individuals who

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

4 WHEREAS, in 2019, United States Representative Ben R.  
5 Lujan introduced United States House Resolution 3783, which  
6 was then co-sponsored by United States Representatives  
7 Xochitl Torres Small and Debra A. Haaland, and United States  
8 Senators Tom Udall and Martin T. Heinrich have co-sponsored  
9 Senate Bill 947, both of which would extend compensation to  
10 uranium workers who were exposed from 1972 to 1990; and

11 WHEREAS, United States House Resolution 3783 and United  
12 States Senate Bill 947 also proposed expanding the list of  
13 eligible workers to include uranium core drillers, in  
14 addition to uranium miners, millers and ore transporters, as  
15 employees potentially eligible for compensation from the  
16 federal Radiation Exposure Compensation Act; and

17 WHEREAS, United States House Resolution 3783 would have  
18 added other areas to the list of downwind areas in  
19 New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Utah  
20 and Guam; and

21 WHEREAS, United States House Resolution 3783 and United  
22 States Senate Bill 947 would have made all qualifying claims  
23 eligible for one hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000) of  
24 compensation, regardless of whether the claimants were  
25 exposed as miners, millers, ore transporters, on-site

1 employees or individuals living in a downwind area; and

2 WHEREAS, United States House Resolution 3783 and United  
3 States Senate Bill 947 would have expanded the types of  
4 medical conditions that render claimants eligible for  
5 compensation pursuant to the federal Radiation Exposure  
6 Compensation Act; and

7 WHEREAS, members of New Mexico's congressional  
8 delegation are continuing their previous efforts to expand  
9 and improve compensation for individuals exposed to  
10 radiation; and

11 WHEREAS, on January 24, 2017, United States Senate Bill  
12 197, a bill to amend the federal Radiation Exposure  
13 Compensation Act to improve compensation for workers involved  
14 in uranium mining, and for other purposes, was co-sponsored  
15 by Senators Tom Udall and Martin T. Heinrich;

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

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