

1 HOUSE MEMORIAL 15
2 **57TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2025**

3 INTRODUCED BY

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10 A MEMORIAL

11 RAISING AWARENESS OF THE CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY PEOPLE
12 EXPOSED TO RADIATION AND ENCOURAGING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS
13 TO SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO EXPAND COMPENSATION UNDER THE FEDERAL
14 RADIATION EXPOSURE COMPENSATION ACT.
15

16 WHEREAS, from 1945 to 1962, the United States government
17 conducted an extensive weapons development program testing
18 hundreds of nuclear weapons; and

19 WHEREAS, to provide uranium for the atmospheric nuclear
20 testing being carried out, the United States hired people to
21 mine and process uranium in many areas, especially in New
22 Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, Montana, Nevada and Utah; and

23 WHEREAS, large uranium deposits were found on or near the
24 Navajo Nation, and many Navajo people were employed to work in
25 the mines; and

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1 WHEREAS, thousands of people were exposed to unhealthy and
2 damagingly high doses of radiation through atmospheric nuclear
3 weapons testing or through employment in uranium mining and
4 processing; and

5 WHEREAS, radiation exposure has been linked to many
6 serious illnesses, including leukemia and multiple myeloma;
7 renal failures; breast, bladder, colon, liver, lung,
8 esophageal, ovarian, renal, prostate and stomach cancers;
9 gastrointestinal, neurological and blood disorders; and other
10 conditions leading to debilitation or death; and

11 WHEREAS, in 1990, the United States congress passed the
12 federal Radiation Exposure Compensation Act; and

13 WHEREAS, the federal Radiation Exposure Compensation Act
14 was designed to provide some compensation to people exposed to
15 radiation through certain atmospheric nuclear weapons tests and
16 uranium mining and processing operations; and

17 WHEREAS, the federal Radiation Exposure Compensation Act
18 designated certain areas of Arizona and Utah as official
19 downwind areas that were downwind of atmospheric nuclear
20 weapons testing, for which compensation would be provided; and

21 WHEREAS, the federal Radiation Exposure Compensation Act
22 limited compensation for uranium miners, millers and haulers to
23 those workers employed by the uranium industry before January
24 1, 1972; and

25 WHEREAS, the amount of monetary compensation awarded

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1 pursuant to the federal Radiation Exposure Compensation Act
2 differs widely according to whether an individual was exposed
3 to radiation due to being in a downwind area or according to
4 the type of uranium industry-related work the individual
5 performed; and

6 WHEREAS, under the strict guidelines of the federal
7 Radiation Exposure Compensation Act, many individuals who have
8 lived downwind from test sites outside of Arizona, Nevada and
9 Utah or who worked in the uranium industry were provided no
10 remedy for their radiation exposure; and

11 WHEREAS, on April 28, 2022, United States Senators Ben Ray
12 Luján and Martin Heinrich co-sponsored United States Senate
13 Bill 4119, which was signed by President Joe Biden on June 7,
14 2022, becoming public law 117-119 and extending the federal
15 Radiation Exposure Compensation Act by two years; and

16 WHEREAS, members of New Mexico's congressional delegation
17 are continuing their previous efforts to expand and improve
18 compensation for individuals exposed to radiation; and

19 WHEREAS, on May 18, 2023, United States Senate Bill 1751
20 was introduced by Senators Ben Ray Luján and Martin Heinrich
21 and fifteen bipartisan co-sponsors to amend and extend the
22 federal Radiation Exposure Compensation Act, expanding
23 eligibility, raising compensation amounts and extending by
24 nineteen years the expiration date of the federal Radiation
25 Exposure Compensation Act; and

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1 WHEREAS, legislation mirroring Senator Luján's bill was
2 introduced on June 30, 2023 as United States House Resolution
3 4426 by United States Representatives Teresa Leger Fernandez,
4 Melanie Stansbury and Gabe Vasquez and thirty-nine bipartisan
5 co-sponsors; and

6 WHEREAS, in 2024, United States Senator Josh Hawley
7 introduced United States Senate Bill 3853, and in 2025, he
8 introduced United States Senate Bill 243 to extend the period
9 for filing claims under the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act
10 and to provide for compensation under that act;

11 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
12 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the United
13 States congress be encouraged to support the passage of United
14 States Senate Bill 243 and any subsequent federal legislation
15 to expand and improve compensation under the federal Radiation
16 Exposure Compensation Act; and

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
18 transmitted to members of New Mexico's congressional delegation
19 and members of the United States congress.