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HOUSE MEMORIAL 5

**56TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2024**

INTRODUCED BY

Anthony Allison

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE NEW MEXICO CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO EXPAND COMPENSATION UNDER THE FEDERAL RADIATION EXPOSURE COMPENSATION ACT FOR INDIVIDUALS EXPOSED TO RADIATION.

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

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

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

WHEREAS, large uranium deposits were found on or near the

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1 Navajo Nation, and many Navajo people were employed to work in  
2 the mines; and

3 WHEREAS, thousands of individuals have been exposed to  
4 radiation in large doses through atmospheric nuclear weapons  
5 testing or through employment in uranium mining and processing;  
6 and

7 WHEREAS, radiation exposure has been linked to a number of  
8 serious illnesses in exposed individuals, including cancers;  
9 gastrointestinal, neurological and blood disorders; and other  
10 conditions leading to the debilitation or death of individuals  
11 exposed to radiation; and

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

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

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

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

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1 1, 1972; and

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

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

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

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

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

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1 Compensation Act; and

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

7 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF  
8 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the New Mexico  
9 congressional delegation be requested to continue to support  
10 proposed federal legislation to expand and improve compensation  
11 under the federal Radiation Exposure Compensation Act; and

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
13 transmitted to members of the New Mexico congressional  
14 delegation.