

**STATEMENT OF PHIL HARRISON  
NAVAJO URANIUM RADIATION VICTIMS COMMITTEE  
Before  
RADIOACTIVE AND HAZARDOUS MATERIAL COMMITTEE  
SEPTEMBER 06, 2022  
GRANTS, NEW MEXICO**

Good morning Mr., Chair and members of New Mexico Radioactive and Hazardous Materials Committee. My name is Phil Harrison an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation and currently an advocate for a grassroots organization formed in 1970's in Red Valley/Cove, Arizona titled "Navajo Uranium Radiation Victims Committee". The community of Cove, Arizona was the site of hundreds of uranium mines from 1950 to 1966.

I am a former underground uranium miner and a former DOE Remediation worker stabilizing contaminated radioactive materials at Rare Metals in Tuba City, Arizona. This site is one of 17 locations where Uranium Yellowcake was produced for Nuclear Weapons Development for National Defense.

The former uranium miners were warned about the serious consequences of adverse health effects and hundreds has now passed on. There are stories of how these mines lack proper safety equipment, safety shoes, respirators, masks, hardly any ventilation, proper attire for working underground. In addition, these miners ate their lunch in the mines and consumed contaminated water. They went home after working all day with radioactive debris on their clothing and exposed their family members to radiation, Toxic substances and traces of deadly chemicals.

The NURVC was formed in late 1970's and began their work to pursue some sort of compensation. The first lawsuit was filed titled Begay VS Kerr McGee which was dismissed. Our focus turns to Congress to correct the wrongs for reparations. In 1990 after all the efforts and hard work the first compensation was signed into law for former underground uranium miners. This same law did not go far enough so the work continues to amend the RECA law and was successful as it was amended in July of 2000.

After the RECA was amended, we went after those changes that were not address or included in the July 2000 law. The members of US Congress have encouraged the impacted victims to bring it back to Washington, DC which is now "Radiation Exposure Compensation Act Amendment of 2019 and presented in July of 2009.

The RECA Amendment SB 2798 is sponsored by Senator Ben R. Lujan and Senator Michael Crapo of Idaho. The HR 5338 is sponsored by New Mexico Congresswoman Teresa Leger Fernandez. Both bills will address many of shortfalls in RECA through the following program amendments. In addition, the NURVC worked behind the scenes to extend the RECA program for additional 2 years which was set to expire July 2022.

In conclusion we like to see the federal government work aggressively to understand how hard these Cold War Veterans have worked to establish THE National Security and sacrificed their life as many have died without Just Compensation and families still waiting for Justice. The Navajo Nation is a designated area for radioactive fallout from Nevada Test site and yes hundreds have died from cancers. This includes the Trinity Down Winders in Alamogordo, NM.

In conclusion, this RECA Amendment needs to be address and pass by US Congress as soon as possible. The federal government is liable for all damages to human health, land, vegetation, water aquifers, home structures, an abandoned uranium mine. In addressing remedies basic human rights were violated to ones health, and should be free from personal injuries, bodily harm, and sadly many love ones have left us by US Government federal negligence.