

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE NEW MEXICO CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO SUPPORT AMENDMENTS 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 Navajo Nation, and many Navajo people were employed to work in the mines; and

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

WHEREAS, radiation exposure has been linked to a number of serious illnesses in exposed individuals, including

cancers; gastrointestinal, neurological and blood disorders; and other conditions leading to the debilitation or death of individuals exposed to radiation; and

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

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

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

WHEREAS, the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act limited compensation for uranium miners, millers and haulers to those workers whom the uranium industry employed before January 1, 1972; and

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

WHEREAS, under the strict guidelines of the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act, many individuals who have lived

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

WHEREAS, United States Representative Ben R. Lujan and United States Senator Tom Udall have introduced House Bill 1645 and Senate Bill 773, respectively, to extend compensation to uranium workers who were exposed from 1972 to 1990; and

WHEREAS, House Bill 1645 and Senate Bill 773 also expand the list of eligible workers to include uranium core drillers, in addition to uranium miners, millers and ore transporters, as employees potentially eligible for Radiation Exposure Compensation Act compensation; and

WHEREAS, House Bill 1645 and Senate Bill 773 would add to the list of downwind areas in New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada and Utah, as well as in the United States territory of Guam; and

WHEREAS, House Bill 1645 and Senate Bill 773 would make all qualifying claims eligible for one hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000) of compensation, regardless of whether the claimants were exposed as miners, millers, ore transporters, on-site employees or individuals living in a downwind area; and

WHEREAS, House Bill 1645 and Senate Bill 773 would expand the types of medical conditions rendering claimants eligible for Radiation Exposure Compensation Act compensation;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the New Mexico congressional delegation be requested to support the provisions of United States House Bill 1645 and United States Senate Bill 773; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that United States Representative Ben R. Lujan and United States Senator Tom Udall be congratulated for their vision in introducing legislation to expand, under the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act, the rights of individuals exposed to radiation; and

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