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HOUSE MEMORIAL 70

52ND LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2015

INTRODUCED BY

D. Wonda Johnson

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

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

3 WHEREAS, many thousands of individuals have been exposed
4 to 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 Radiation Exposure Compensation Act; and

14 WHEREAS, the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act was
15 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 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 Radiation Exposure Compensation Act limited
24 compensation for uranium miners, millers and haulers to those
25 workers whom the uranium industry employed before January 1,

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1 1972; and

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

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

12 WHEREAS, United States Representative Ben R. Lujan
13 introduced House Bill 1645 and United States Senators Tom Udall
14 and Martin Heinrich have cosponsored Senate Bill 331, to extend
15 compensation to uranium workers who were exposed from 1972 to
16 1990; and

17 WHEREAS, House Bill 1645 and Senate Bill 331 also expand
18 the list of eligible workers to include uranium core drillers,
19 in addition to uranium miners, millers and ore transporters, as
20 employees potentially eligible for Radiation Exposure
21 Compensation Act compensation; and

22 WHEREAS, House Bill 1645 and Senate Bill 331 would add to
23 the list of downwind areas in New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado,
24 Idaho, Montana, Nevada and Utah, as well as in the United
25 States territory of Guam; and

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