



SAN JUAN COUNTY COMMISSION

Willie Grayeyes Chairman
Kenneth Maryboy Vice-Chair
Bruce Adams Commissioner
Mack McDonald Administrator

February 12, 2021

The Honorable Seth Damon
Speaker
Navajo Nation Council
P.O. Box 3390
Window Rock, Arizona 86515

Dear Speaker Damon,

We read, with some concern, the Navajo Nation Council's press release from January 12th regarding the continuation of Uranium and Radiation Exposure Compensation Act advocacy. We believe the Navajo Nation Council is wise in seeking further funding for this critical endeavor.

There are numerous citizens of San Juan County whose lives have been harmed or destroyed by exposure to radiation through mining, working at the various mills, transporting the uranium ore from the mines to the mills, or simply by being present when the winds blew radiation from the nuclear weapons tests over our communities. We know you and the members of the council are well acquainted with these many tragedies.

For over 30 years, this bipartisan legislation has helped provide a small measure of justice for members of the Navajo Nation in San Juan County whose lives were upended by the federal government's carelessness. Even though these events transpired long ago, many Navajo families are still reeling from the effects of radioactive fallout—and RECA is still helping them. But the law expires in 2022 and is in urgent need of reform. Updating this legislation is a moral imperative. If we let it expire, we leave hundreds of Navajo men and women unable to pay their medical bills for issues directly related to radiation poisoning. RECA, as it is currently written, extends benefits only to uranium miners, millers, and transporters who worked until 1972. But an updated bill could extend benefits to those who worked after 1972, many of whom have developed cancer and respiratory diseases as a result of radiation exposure.

We understand that the Council is working hard under exceedingly difficult circumstances. As you move forward in the weeks and months ahead, we would like to underscore the critical importance of reforming and extending the RECA program so that it remains viable for many years to come.

Most respectfully,

Willie Greyeyes
Bruce Adams
Kenneth Maryboy