



# SAN JUAN COUNTY COMMISSION

Willie Grayeyes

Chairman

Kenneth Maryboy

Vice-Chair

Bruce Adams

Commissioner

Mack McDonald

Administrator

April 16, 2021

Re: Victims of Mills Tailings Exposure Cancer Screening Program Funding Request

Congressman Curtis  
C/O Brian Fahey  
Office of US Congressman John Curtis  
2400 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Congressman Curtis,

San Juan County requests Community Project Funding to reestablish the Victims of Mills Tailings Exposure Cancer Screening Program that was originally funded through the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriation Bill of 2009. The Utah Department of Public Health received over \$400,000 in funding and then-Senators Hatch and Bennett made the program request for “health education and screening for citizens exposed to uranium mill tailings.”

The County and those who were impacted by the Federal Government operations here in Monticello, which affected those living within the County and those who have moved away continue to express a desire for cancer screening. We continue to see and experience a higher rate of cancer continue to have a high rate of cancer probabilities than other areas within the nation. With the escalating costs of healthcare and insurance, the costs of someone who has cancer can reach well over an average of \$150,000 per patient. The ability to catch cancers within the early stages reduces these costs which aids in the overall decreased costs for treatment but more importantly the survivability.

If 10% of cancers were detected from the screening program in 2009 of the 950 individuals screened, then that means about 95 patients received proper cancer care. The average amount a cancer treatment costs is \$150,000 according to AARP. This, multiplied by the 95 patients, amounts to over \$14 million, well above the total amount we are requesting for this project.

Reading through the numbers, each a representation of someone’s loved one who worked, lived and went to school near or downwind of a Government processing facility that was created to help, not only in our national efforts to obtain and refine uranium, establish a nuclear program, but to earn a living, raise a family and to enjoy life. However, the outcome of that has not been kind. At the time, workers would work in the mill’s day and night, would take tillings that they thought were safe, home, to add to topsoil in their gardens, add it to their

landscaping to level off areas, using it in their building's construction and remodels, all the while spreading a material which will cause long lasting generational medical problems.

San Juan County is requesting your assistance in a allocation request of \$515,952 of one-time funding to help us re-establish the program and we hope and encourage members of both Congress and the Senate provide on-going continued assistance for future funding of such an important and preventative program.

We thank you, for all that you do for our County, and the helpfulness of your staff in all of the efforts made on behalf of our County.

Sincerely,

Willie Grayeyes  
Commission Chair