



The 24TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL  
Office of the Speaker

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## Navajo Nation Leaders applaud the two-year extension of the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act by the United States Senate

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**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** — Speaker Seth Damon and members of the 24th Navajo Nation Council applaud the U.S. Senate for unanimously approving a two-year extension of the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA) program for two years, allowing individuals more time to apply for the compensation they deserve. The bill now goes to Speaker Nancy Pelosi and the House of Representatives for consideration.

This short-term extension provides lawmakers time to seek a long-term solution that would extend RECA into 2040, expand downwinder eligibility based on geographic residency, and expand the range of years that can be used for calculating exposure for certain individuals working in uranium mines, mills, or transporting uranium ore.

“We commend the leadership of New Mexico Senator Ben Ray Luján, Idaho Senator Mike Crapo, and Utah Senator Mike Lee for their foresight and advocacy to getting this passed. The Navajo Nation urges Speaker Pelosi and our Congressional representatives to immediately pass this legislation on behalf of the countless families dealing with the uranium legacy. The federal government owes a great debt to our former uranium miners, downwinders, and the families suffering from the devastating sickness uranium brings,” said Speaker Seth Damon (Bááhaalí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Red Rock, Rock Springs, Tséyatch).

Senators Luján, Crapo, and Lee have been staunch advocates for RECA expansion efforts that would include coverage for all of those who lived downwind of above-ground atomic weapons tests in the 1950s and 1960s.

“For decades, the communities I represent have been advocating for those affected by uranium exposure, cancer, and the sickness it brings to communities. Congress must act now and reauthorize the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act program so that our families get the compensation they need to survive. The uranium legacy has only caused damage, harm, and loss of life for the Navajo people,” said Council Delegate Thomas Walker Jr. (Birdsprings, Leupp, Tolani Lake, Coalmine Canyon, Cameron).

Last year, Resolution No. CO-60-21 was passed by the Navajo Nation Council requesting for a United States Congressional hearing to be conducted within the Navajo Nation on the long-term effects of uranium on the health of the Navajo people.

“We urge Speaker Nancy Pelosi and our U.S. Representatives from Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, and Colorado to immediately reauthorize RECA. Many of the uranium miners, truck drivers, and mill operators are no longer here with us because of uranium exposure. Yet, they leave behind families who are sick and need our help. Compensation should not end here but be extended to all members of our Navajo families exposed to the uranium legacy,” said Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay Jr. (Tachee/Blue Gap, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tselani/Cottonwood, Low Mountain).

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The Radiation Exposure Compensation Act was first enacted in 1990, then amended in 2000. Without reauthorization, the RECA program is scheduled to sunset in July. The Navajo Nation Council and President Jonathan Nez continue to meet with Congressional leaders to push forward the RECA extension into 2040.

“We send our appreciation to our Post-71 miners and their families for being advocates for this RECA extension. Many of our women and children witnessed the sickness uranium exposure brought into their households. So many of our relatives dug up, breathed the dust, and were poisoned by the radiation. RECA is important to our families, and we support the extension into 2040. That dark legacy lives on today and it must end now,” said Madam Chair Amber Kanazbah Crotty (Cove, Toadlena/Two Grey Hills, Red Valley, Tsé’áłnáoozt’í’í, Sheep Springs, Beclabito, Gad’ii’áhi/Tó Ko’i).

Post-71 Uranium Workers Committee was formed in 2007 by a group of former uranium miners, millers, ore haulers, and drillers who aim to document health conditions among people who worked in the uranium industry after 1971.

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