



The Navajo Nation  
Office of the President and Vice President

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**President Nez meets with the Navajo Uranium Radiation  
Victims Committee regarding the RECA Amendments of 2021**



**PHOTO: Navajo Uranium Radiation Victims Committee President Phil Harrison speaks about health care concerns for former uranium miners at the Office of the President and Vice President in Window Rock, Ariz. on Oct. 13, 2021.**

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – On Wednesday, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty, Navajo Nation EPA Executive Director Valinda Shirley, Office of the Speaker, Navajo Department of Health Legislative Analyst Michele Morris, Navajo Nation Washington Office, and the Office of U.S. Sen. Ben Ray Luján met with the Navajo Uranium Radiation Victims Committee, a group of Navajo former uranium miners led by Phil Harrison, to provide updates and to reaffirm their support for the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act Amendments of 2021. The bill was introduced in the U.S House and Senate on Sept. 22.

The Radiation Exposure Compensation Act was first enacted in 1990 then amended in 2000, and is set to expire in 2022. The amendments introduced last month would extend the Act until 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.

“This is a united effort on behalf of former uranium miners and their families, to secure just compensation and benefits for the health issues and detrimental impacts of uranium mining conducted by the federal government. The RECA Amendments of 2021 presents an opportunity for Congress to work with the Navajo Nation, the Navajo Uranium Radiation Victims Committee, and other impacted groups to appropriately extend RECA's coverage,” said President Nez.

He noted that while the Navajo Nation supports the bill, he and Vice President Myron Lizer strongly urge Congress to go further to include all downwinders, to expand eligibility for coverage under the program to include additional categories of uranium workers and types of cancers and other radiation-related illnesses, and to increase the compensation cap to a minimum of \$200,000 per individual regardless of worker classification or category of disease.

Navajo Uranium Radiation Victims Committee President Phil Harrison, Jr. and committee members Tommy Reed, Harry Desiderio, Leslie Begay, and Jerry Benally were in attendance and shared personal hardships and their experiences with health care disparities, medical benefits, and services for former uranium miners. The group has been advocating for many years for the initial RECA bill enacted in 1990 and for the reauthorization and expansion of benefits and compensation.

Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty, who went to Washington D.C. in June 2018 with a delegation of former uranium mine workers and President Nez to advocate for the RECA amendments, also expressed her commitment to support the latest bill. She has long advocated for the former uranium miners and has worked closely with federal partners to advance the RECA amendments and extension.

“We have a commitment to the former uranium miners and their families to do everything we can to get the RECA Amendments passed by Congress. We are very grateful to the Navajo Uranium Radiation Victims Committee, Council Delegate Crotty, Senator Luján, and others for coming together today to ensure that we are on the same page and continue to present a united voice at the federal level,” added President Nez.

In March, President Nez also provided testimony before the U.S. Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties, in support of Navajo people who continue to experience long-term health impacts due to radioactive contamination and exposure from abandoned uranium mines. He also met with members of the Navajo Uranium Radiation Victims Committee to gain input and support for the testimony.

The Nez-Lizer Administration will continue to work with members of Congress and others to support the RECA Amendments of 2021.

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