



The Navajo Nation
Office of the President and Vice President

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President Nez applauds the signing of the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act two-year extension by President Biden



PHOTO: Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez discusses the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act during a meeting with U.S. Sen. Ben Ray Luján (D- N.M.) in Washington D.C. on March 29, 2022.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer applaud the signing of a two-year extension of the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA) by U.S. President Joe Biden, who signed the bill into law at the White House on Tuesday. The current Act was set to expire in July.

The two-year extension provides more time to work with congressional members on a long-term solution that 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.

In March, President Nez met with members of both political parties in Washington, D.C., to advocate and speak in support of the affected Navajo families and the Navajo Uranium Radiation Victims Committee. The Radiation Exposure Compensation Act was first enacted in 1990, then amended in 2000, and is set to expire in July of this year.

“We thank the Navajo Uranium Radiation Victims Committee, President Biden, the Senate and House, and many others who advocated for the extension. This measure was passed with bipartisan support for former uranium miners, downwinders, and many others who have to live with the devastating health effects to this day. Now that the extension is signed, we can continue to work for the reauthorization and expansion of RECA through 2040. The meetings we had with members of both political parties were critical to garnering the support that was needed to push the two-year extension through Congress and the White House,” said President Nez.

In March 2021, President Nez 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 to hear directly from former uranium miners and their families.

“This is an important step in the right direction and sets us on the path of negotiating a long-term solution to help our people who continue to be affected by uranium mines and the resulting health issues. We will continue working with our federal partners and community members to ensure that the long-term needs are met. We appreciate the support of all of our congressional delegation and officials who worked together to get the two-year extension across the finish line,” stated Vice President Lizer.

In addition to the reauthorization, the Navajo Nation continues to 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.

President Nez and Vice President Lizer will continue working with Congressional members and federal officials to garner support from House members for the long-term extension of RECA. The Nez-Lizer Administration also thanks the 24th Navajo Nation Council, Navajo Nation Washington Office, and others for their support.

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