

Radiation Exposure Compensation Act

The Background

Uranium mine and mill workers and downwind communities shouldered an unfair burden of pollution and exposure to radiation in order to produce the materials needed to fuel the U.S. nuclear weapons program.

In response, Congress passed a law in 1990, the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA) to provide compensation to select workers active in the uranium industry from 1941 to 1971, and a few downwind communities that received large doses of radioactive fallout from the above-ground nuclear weapons tests at the Nevada Test Site.

(Read the 1990 RECA Act)

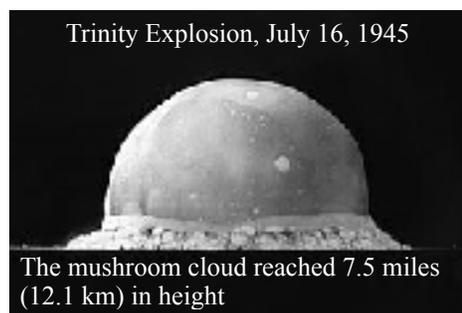
But risks from radiation didn't stop in 1971. Uranium mines continued to pollute while operating to meet the demand for fuel for nuclear power plants. Many more individuals and communities are in need of health care and compensation due to their unwilling and unknowing exposures to radiation contamination. As a result of the 15,000 abandoned uranium mines in the US, many communities are still being exposed daily to radon in their air, and uranium in their drinking water.



115th Congress and RECA Amendments

Two new bills have been introduced in 2017 that would add much needed amendments to the original RECA bill. These amendments would expand the definitions of uranium workers and include all uranium workers that worked after 1971 up until December 31, 1990.

(Read Senate Bill 197 with 4 cosponsors) (Read House Bill 2049 with 25 cosponsors)



Trinity Explosion, July 16, 1945

The mushroom cloud reached 7.5 miles (12.1 km) in height

In addition, several new counties in Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico and Utah are added through the amendments. The New Mexico Tularosa Basin downwind community near the site of the first nuclear explosion at the Trinity Site will be included as well.

(Learn about your potential exposures.)

These are important changes to the RECA Bill and will move the U.S. toward just compensation for the uranium workers at the beginning of the nuclear fuel chain, and for the downwind communities exposed to radioactive fallout.

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