

Extend and Expand the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act

The Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA) provides compensation to people unknowingly exposed to radiation from U.S. nuclear weapons testing and uranium mining. This program provides lifesaving benefits to Americans who, since 1945, have suffered directly from the expansion of the U.S. nuclear weapons industry.

From 1945 to 1962, the U.S. government conducted hundreds of above-ground nuclear tests. These tests spread radiation thousands of miles, exposing many communities to unsafe radiation levels. Uranium workers and hundreds of thousands of service members in particular, were exposed to dangerous levels of radiation through nuclear weapons testing and the cleanup of radioactive materials.

In 1990, Congress passed RECA with broad bipartisan support to provide partial restitution to people suffering from illnesses linked to radiation exposure. However, RECA is set to expire in 2024. If this happens, entire communities will lose crucial health coverage and cancer screenings, and many will never get the chance to apply for compensation.

Radiation Exposure Compensation Act Amendments (HR. 4426/S.1751), led by Sen. Lujan (D-NM) and Rep. Leger Fernandez (NM-3), would expand the RECA program to better cover those harmed by U.S. nuclear weapons testing and uranium mining. The bill would extend RECA's expiration date and expand its geographic scope, while increasing the amount of compensation to reflect the costs of care and inflation, allowing past successful claimants to receive the difference between their claim and the increased amount.

As a Quaker organization, FCNL supports efforts to address the suffering caused by past injustices. Our shared vision of a more peaceful and secure world is not possible without redressing the harms of past and present.

Congress must pass a RECA expansion bill that will:

- » Provide a long-term extension of the program.
- » Expand the eligibility areas to parts of ID, MT, CO, NM, Guam, and all of NV, AZ, and UT, which were shown to have received high levels of fallout from nuclear testing.
- » Extend compensation to more types of uranium workers to better cover workers who suffer from exposure-related illnesses.
- » Expand the number of compensable illnesses that are not covered under the current RECA program.
- » Increase the amount of compensation to reflect the costs of care and inflation.
- » Provide health care benefits and cancer screenings.

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