

Dear (Sirs)

I have lived in Utah my entire life and for most of that time I was blessed with relatively good health. but over that time I have watched as numerous close friends, neighbors and relatives died from cancer. 2 children in my class in grade school died from leukemia, another from bone cancer. I have seen close friends die from unusual cancers of the heart. the liver, the throat, the pancreas and the kidneys. My eldest brother Jim was in the Army during the early 1950's and after his discharge was diagnosed with an unusual form of late-onset juvenile diabetes and complications which would take his life. My second eldest brother Jack worked as a surveyor for the Utah State Road Commission and worked in the open in southern Utah during the nuclear testing in Nevada. He suffered from numerous forms of melanoma and "myelomas of an unknown origin" which took his life. My brother Ned suffered from Crohns disease and other bowel related ailments including the cancer which killed him. . I have known at very close friends die of mysterious cancers "of unknown origin." All of these were young vibrant people and they shared something else. All of them lived in the same general area of Salt Lake City, near the mouth of Parley's Canyon. There is some evidence that radiation from nuclear testing in Nevada was concentrated and deposited by rainfall at the mouths of the canyons along the Wasatch Front.

There may be no way of ever knowing exactly how many cases of cancer were directly caused by nuclear testing in Nevada. There may be no way to link a specific cancer to a specific individual. There may be no way to prove that other health problems are traceable to radiation exposure....and that is exactly the point. WE DON'T KNOW! and without the reauthorization of the RECA extension we will never know.

The Cold War may not have been a "shooting conflict," but it had plenty of casualties nonetheless. Civilians across this country were subjected to repeated exposures of radiation from nuclear testing. The immediate health effects of these tests were swept under the rug in the name of National Security. The long term effects were ignored in the struggle to defeat the Soviets. The truth is we didn't want to know the real consequences of nuclear testing. The civilian population of the United States bore the brunt of the conflict. It would be criminal to turn your back on these patriotic Americans by ignoring the great debt we owe them.

I urge you to vote in support of HR 5338

Sincerely,
Gerald M. McDonough

