

December 7, 2021

Dear Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

I am writing to urge your support of HR 5338, which gets a markup Wednesday. I grew up in Salt Lake City and have experienced a wide range of autoimmune disorders that have made my days particularly difficult. I have two sisters who had cancer and one sister die from an autoimmune disorder. Some of my childhood friends have also struggled with cancer and autoimmune disorders. Yet, none of them are eligible for compensation under RECA, which only covers some counties in southern Utah. There was no lead shield at county lines that kept radioactive fallout from nuclear testing away from our communities. We know it fell out on northern Utah and beyond. Radiobiologists at the University of Utah inadvertently measured that fallout after one particularly dirty test in 1962 and we know from maps kept by the Department of Energy that fallout repeatedly affected all of Utah and the West. So many have died since then and more are still dying. My father was a professor at the University of Utah. He had to visit a facility in Idaho where they checked visitors with a Geiger counter before and after their visit. His reading before entering the facility were astronomically high. The person operating the counter said, "you must be from Utah." It was known that Utah was hard hit, all of Utah. We were all unwitting soldiers in the Cold War.

Please see that justice is served and support the expansion and extension of RECA as laid out in HR5338. It is a matter of political will and priority and moreover a matter of social justice.

Julie Meredith

