



**National Association of
Atomic Veterans, Inc.**
Including Nuclear Veterans



December 6, 2021

Re: H.R. 5338 – 117th Congress: Radiation Exposure Compensation (RECA) Act Amendments of 2021

Dear Chairman Congressman Nadler and Judiciary members,

I'm writing on behalf of the National Association of Atomic Veterans, Inc. We support HR5338, however, we ask for some amendments to the bill language. Those requests are listed later in this letter.

RECA, administered though the justice department is the least bureaucratic and most efficient program we have experienced. Our member experience is if a RECA claimant fills out the paperwork properly, the claim is resolved on average in six to twelve months. Our experience with the Veterans Administration (VA) is a successful claim on average is ten to fourteen years. It should be noted that there is a provision between RECA and the VA to prevent double dipping (collecting from both programs).

Another important aspect of RECA is if the Veteran has not made/received a claim with RECA or the VA prior to their death, under RECA the family can make a claim. This is not an option under the VA. RECA is often the difference between a Veteran or their family becoming bankrupt and/or homeless. Under the request for the Enewetak Atoll personnel to be added, I will provide an example below.

We request the following amendments to HR5338:

Addition or inclusion of the;

- Enewetak Atoll Radiological Clean-up Project personnel (Veterans and Civilians). Note: This group was included in the RECA House bill versions in the 115th and 116th sessions. One example, of how RECA would help, is Paul Laird (featured in the American Legion,) he was part of the Enewetak clean up project. He contracted and recovered from five of six unique cancers, losing his battle to the sixth cancer. Paul never had a successful VA claim. Upon Paul's passing the family had to sell their home and move. His spouse/family is not eligible for VA DIC.
- 1966 Palomares clean-up personnel.
- Amchitka Island (in the Aleutian Island chain in southwest Alaska) testing personnel and downwinders.



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Correction of an administrative issue with the current and future RECA program. Currently, the RECA program sunsets on July 10, 2022. The trust fund and last date to file a claim terminates on the same day. This creates a possibility for a timely claim to be made and upon processing, no funds to pay the claim. For this reason we recommend the Trust fund terminate at least three years after last date to file a timely claim.

We thank you for your attention to this important program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Keith Kiefer, TTEE". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

**Keith Kiefer
NAAV National Commander**