



December 5, 2021

Chairman Jerrold Nadler  
U.S. House Committee on the Judiciary  
2138 Rayburn House Office Building Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (HR 5338)

Chairman Nadler,


I am writing to offer my support for the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (HR 5338). For context, I am Professor of Epidemiology in the School of Public Health at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. I have spent my research career strengthening our understanding of the health effects of occupational and environmental exposures, particularly those related to the nuclear fuels cycle. I have conducted studies of cancer among workers at U.S. Department of Energy facilities, among the Japanese survivors of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and among industrial and uranium mining cohorts in the US and Europe. I have served as a visiting scientist at the World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer, the French Institute for Radiological Protection and Nuclear Safety, and at the Radiation Effects Research Foundation in Hiroshima, Japan, and served as Director of the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health-funded training program in occupational epidemiology at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. I am a member of the U.S. President's Advisory Board on Radiation and Worker Health, and have served on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Science Advisory Board. I currently serve as principal investigator leading an international study of uranium miners that examines long-term health effects of their exposures.

Our long-term research on over 118,000 uranium miners provides strong evidence of persistently elevated mortality rates for a range of categories of causes of death, including cancer, among uranium miners. More than thirty years after start of employment in uranium mining, the legacy of their work-related exposures is clearly shown by substantial excesses of death. It is important that RECA is extended, and not allowed to expire.

Our research also demonstrates that the elevated mortality rates associated with uranium mining did not disappear among those workers who were hired in more contemporary years. They too provide strong evidence of persistently elevated mortality rates. These findings support the expansion of RECA, as outlined in HR 5338, to include support for Post-71 workers. Screening and medical benefits for these workers, many constituting underserved, poor, and rural population, is important support for a community of workers who played a crucial role in our national defense.

I hope that these comments are helpful to you in your deliberations.

Sincerely,

  
David Richardson