



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



To: Committee of Judiciary, Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties

Representative Steve Cohen Chairman
Representative Deborah Ross Vice Chair
Representative Mike Johnson Ranking Member
Representative Cori Bush
Representative Michelle Fischbach
Representative Sylvia R. Garcia
Representative Sheila Jackson Lee
Representative Henry C. "Hank" Johnson
Representative Tom McClintock
Representative Burgess Owens
Representative Jamie Raskin
Representative Chip Roy

From: Mr. Keith Kiefer, NAAV (National Association of Atomic Veterans) National Commander, & Enewetak Radiological Cleanup Veteran (1978)

Subject: Examining the Need to Expand Eligibility Under the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act

I would like to thank this committee for their interest in and support of Atomic Veterans and the opportunity to testify.

My name is Keith Kiefer, I have the honor to serve as the NAAV National Commander. I was also part of the Enewetak Radiological Cleanup Project in 1978. This project was conducted from 1977 to 1980.

Full disclosure: Even though I'm an Enewetak Radiological Cleanup Veteran, I would not personally benefit from this Act, since my related illnesses are not included.

Both NAAV and myself support the passage of this Act and amendments.



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Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA) is intended to provide some compensation for those whom, through no fault of their own, have been adversely effected by the “Cold War” Nuclear legacy.

RECA will presently sunset (terminate) on July 10, 2022 if action is not taken soon. This program is one of the best implemented programs that exist. Individuals qualifying for this program have been adversely affected by ionization radiation contamination through air, food and/or water consumed. They have been impacted economically and with adverse health outcomes.

Our experience with RECA and Claimants is this program is often the difference between individuals loosing there home and/or bankruptcy.

“Atomic Veterans” (On site participants) were under an oath of secrecy until it was lifted in 1996 though the Nuclear Radiation and Secrecy Agreements Act. Under this oath these Veterans could not talk with their doctor, spouse or family members without risking criminal and/or civil prosecution and fines. NAAV still runs into individuals that are unaware this oath of secrecy has been rescinded.

As records are declassified and become more accessible, information regarding the reach of this contamination (ionization radiation, fallout) are revealed. Examples are Guam and areas of the States not previously covered. This necessitates the impacted groups to be expanded. Additionally, cohorts previously overlooked should be added; Cleanup operations like Enewetak Atoll and Palomares, Spain should be included, as well as, Broken Arrow operations.

We advocate for the language in HR3783 introduced in the 116th session, adding Palomares, Spain cleanup and Broken Arrow operations, be adopted.

Atomic Veterans have played a vital role in the defense of the Nation.

We favor this legislation and urge it’s expedient passage.

I welcome any questions or further discussion on this topic.

Thank you,

Keith Kiefer, NAAV National Commander, etc.