

Hello Defenders,

The first part of April, four of us participated in the last part of the Peace Walk with the New England Peace Pagoda in Washington, DC. Thanks to their efforts, we were also able to meet with staff from Representatives McGovern, Kennedy, Grassley, and Markeys offices regarding the abandoned uranium mine issue. We send our appreciation to the New England Peace Pagoda, and all the people and foundations who provided support for this work. Thank you so much.

Then in May, Charmaine, as the Spokesperson for the Sioux Nation Treaty Council, was invited to the United Nations in Geneva to attend a meeting on participation at the national and international levels. Please let us know if you wish a copy of her intervention and recommendations.

1. June Quarterly Meeting Although we had tentatively planned for a meeting June 15th, there will be **NO Meeting in June**. The summer months have always been hard times to plan for meetings due to the summer ceremonies, and other activities. We have also planned for Prayer Gatherings for the Summer Solstice, June 21-22, a very sacred time of the year. However, this year, we're asking people on those days to remember Unci Ina Makoce (Grandmother Mother Earth) in your prayers and sacrifices, and with good thoughts for her good health. She continually provides us with every thing we have and need, even though now she is very ill. Please pray for the good health of Grandmother and Mother Earth.

2. Uranium Update

Powertech Uranium Mining Company -- As some of you might remember, one of Defenders unwritten rules is that when there are many involved in an issue, the organization will begin work on another issue as there are so many environmental problems in this Region needing attention. Thank you to the Clean Water Alliance, Dakota Rural Action, ACTion for the Environment, and many others who are now taking up the issue of Powertech Uranium Mining Company. The company has twice borrowed millions of dollars trying to be able to mine uranium in an area northwest of Edgemont, SD. This same area is an ancient Native American burial grounds. The last word we received was that Powertech's stock was worth 6 cents.

Federal Bill -- Our current work on the uranium issue is for the passage of a federal bill called the Uranium Exploration and Mining Accountability Act. (Enclosed) We are hoping Representative Grijalva from Arizona will introduce the bill.

You can help by signing the enclosed letter to Rep. Grijalva and send it with the copy of the bill. Better yet, write one in your own handwriting and send it

. Thank you.

3. Keystone XL Pipeline -- Our Treasurer, Brian Brademeyer, submitted the Defenders response to the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement. If you wish a copy, please let us know as it is nine pages long. Thank you, Brian, for a job well done. Also, we are still working on another process to stop the Pipeline, but want to have all of our ducks in a row before we

inform the public. Our mission and goal is to protect the environment of the 1868 Treaty Territory.

In all of this work, your prayers and good thoughts are what can make a big difference. Thank you.

Address

Date

Representative Raul Grijalva
1511 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Draft Abandoned Uranium Mine Cleanup Bill

Dear Representative Grijalva,

I am sending this letter to you as you are a member of the House Committee on Natural Resources, the Subcommittee on Public Lands and Environmental Regulations, the Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources, and finally, the Native Affairs Subcommittee, because the issue that I will be presenting relates to every one of those committees and your commitment to the American people.

There is one issue, a problem that is affecting all of the United States, and meets all of your efforts at mining reform, protection of wildlife and public lands, and for the good health of Native Americans. That issue is the clean up of more than 3,000 abandoned, open-pit uranium mines in the middle of the country, the Northern Great Plains.

These abandoned open pit uranium mines are in the states of Montana, North Dakota,

Wyoming, South Dakota, and northern Colorado. Many of these mines are open to the public on public lands, with no warning signs and are an open invitation to terrorists.

Although the federal and state agencies are aware of this tremendous problem, very little has been done to clean up these mines since they were built in the 1960s and 70s. In South Dakota, the Congressional delegation fears that the three-million tourists who come to see Mount Rushmore, the Shrine of Democracy, will not come. Those tourists are not aware that they are breathing in air with radioactive particles, and drinking water that contains uranium. Wyoming is also a party to this deception as they want tourists to visit Yellowstone Park, or see the beauty of the mountains and plains, and not know of the more than 2,000 open pit uranium mines and prospects in that state. This is an attack the health of the American people and all other tourists who visit this Region.

Regarding the human health effects of the people in this Region, as all of these mines and prospects are open pits, not underground, the winds carry the dust to the East and South. The lung cancer rate in the Region is the highest in the country. Additionally, four of the largest and poorest Sioux Indian Reservations in the country are in the direct path of this radioactive pollution. Yet, the funds for Indian Health Service are less than that for federal prisoners. Furthermore, the increasing cancer rates in the country are not just being caused by the dust carried from Fukushima, Japan. A nuclear physics professor from the University of Michigan, Dr. K. Kearfott, Ph. D., who studied the situation in northwestern South Dakota as well as the situation in Japan has said,

The radiation levels in parts I visited with my students were higher than those in the evacuated zones around the Fukushima nuclear disaster

There happen to be 103 abandoned uranium mines and prospects in that one area of northwestern South Dakota which she visited.

Representative Grijalva, please will you consider being a sponsor of the attached Draft Bill? Yes, we know it will require funding, but we understand that there is still \$10 billion left with the Department of Energy for Nuclear Waste Disposal that they have not been able to use as it was slated for the Yucca Mountain Waste Depot which is now defunct. Furthermore, this bill is written to help all states with abandoned uranium mines, not just the Northern Great Plains. Not only would it help the environment, the health of all the people and wildlife, but would provide jobs in the cleanup process as well.

Congressman James McGovern of Massachusetts has already said that he will cosponsor this bill if you will introduce it. Many other Representatives and Senators will join once they are aware of this tremendous problem. Thank you so much for your consideration and concern.

Sincerely,

Signature

Printed Name

Uranium Exploration and Mining Accountability Act

(a) FINDINGS. Congress finds that

(1) thousands of abandoned uranium mines and exploratory sites are located throughout the United States, posing substantial, but unquantified, public health and environmental hazards;

(2) the number, location, existing hazard, and off-site migration potential for toxic and radioactive materials from these sites is unknown, as are the costs of appropriate remediation and clean-up of these abandoned sites;

(3) there is no minimum threshold for radiation damage (no dose which is harmless), and radiation causes cancer and other organ damage, especially during fetal development and in young children;

(4) capping the total radiation exposure from these abandoned sites, and reducing this exposure level over time, is in the best public interest; and

(5) the costs for clean-up of these abandoned sites have been externalized from the past uranium mining operations onto the general taxpayers, as have the public health and

environmental costs of these toxic sites the costs for reclamation of any new uranium exploration and mining operations must in future be borne by the mining industry itself.

(b) PURPOSES. The purposes of this section are

(1) to authorize and direct the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (Commission) in conjunction with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), to develop an Action Plan for site specific reclamation of abandoned uranium mines and exploratory sites; and

(2) to further authorize and direct the Commission as well as the EPA to place a National Environmental Security (NES) moratorium on any processing or approval of new permits for uranium exploration or mining operations until the above Action Plan is adopted.

(c) RECLAMATION OF ABANDONED URANIUM MINES AND EXPLORATORY SITES.

(1) INVENTORY. The Commission, EPA, and state and local entities, will establish an inventory of all existing abandoned uranium mining and exploratory sites, grouped into appropriate categories, and assessing those parameters needed to fully quantify and qualify the current radiation levels, off-site migration potential, and current public health and environmental risks.

(2) RECLAMATION OPTIONS. The Commission will establish a range of reclamation options, including technical standards and associated unit costs for their implementation, to achieve exposure risk-reduction levels of 90, 95, and 99 percent for each category of abandoned site inventoried in (1) above.

(3) ACTION PLAN. Based on the Inventory and Reclamation Options established in (1) and (2) above, the Commission will develop a National Environmental Security (NES) Site-Specific Action Plan for reclamation of all existing abandoned uranium mining and exploratory sites, prioritizing sites based on combined risk-reduction and cost criteria. The Action Plan will include a total exposure level and hazard rating projected over time as the Plan is implemented, and establish minimal threshold exposure levels that are to be achieved before any new uranium operations are resumed. The Action Plan shall be subject to public notice, review, and comment

at each site of concern.

(4) PROCESS. The Action Plan, including the Inventory parameters and Reclamation Options, and the exposure threshold level, shall be subject to public notice, review, and comment.

(d) MORATORIUM ON NEW URANIUM EXPLORATION AND MINING PERMITS.

The Commission shall place a moratorium on any processing or approval of new licenses for uranium exploration or mining operations until the above National Environmental Security Site-Specific Action Plan is adopted. Any future licenses issued by the Commission shall be conditional on maintaining compliance with the exposure threshold levels established in (c)(3) above.