

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. SJ0002

Riverton uranium mill tailings remedial action.

Sponsored by: Select Committee On Tribal Relations

A Bill

for

1 A JOINT RESOLUTION requesting Congress to provide for
2 increased monitoring and funding for remediation of the
3 Riverton uranium mill tailings remediation site.

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5 WHEREAS, as a result of uranium and vanadium ore processing
6 from 1958 to 1963 in Fremont County Wyoming, radioactive
7 mill tailings were deposited on the Wind River Indian
8 Reservation approximately two (2) miles from the town of
9 Riverton; and

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11 WHEREAS, in 1988 nearly two million (2,000,000) cubic yards
12 of the contaminated materials were removed from the site,
13 with surface remediation completed in 1989; and

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15 WHEREAS, the federal Uranium Mill Tailings Radiation and
16 Control Act mandated the federal department of energy to

1 regulate cleanup of contaminated ground water at uranium
2 mill tailing sites in accordance with standards adopted by
3 the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA);
4 and

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6 WHEREAS, despite the surface remediation undertaken, ground
7 water contamination occurred at the site, with
8 concentrations of molybdenum and uranium measured in the
9 surficial aquifer at levels forty (40) times greater than
10 maximum concentration limits provided in EPA regulations;
11 and

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13 WHEREAS, the department of energy has adopted a strategy
14 for the surficial aquifer to "flush naturally," in
15 conjunction with institutional controls and verification
16 monitoring in order to meet federal law requirements for
17 uranium and molybdenum to fall below their allowable
18 maximum concentration levels within the next one hundred
19 (100) years; and

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21 WHEREAS, the Wind River flooded to historic levels in 2010,
22 with dramatic spikes in contaminant concentration levels
23 including radium, uranium, molybdenum, manganese and
24 sulfate concentration; and

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2 WHEREAS, these spikes in contaminant levels are contrary to
3 what would be expected if the department of energy models
4 and proposed remediation plan were accurate, and
5 demonstrate that passive remediation through natural
6 flushing is not working at the site; and

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8 WHEREAS, prior to the flood the Nuclear Regulatory
9 Commission had projected that the department of energy's
10 attenuation plan would not meet the mandated maximum levels
11 for certain wells; and

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13 WHEREAS, at least twenty (20) other known contaminants
14 exist but are not monitored under the department of
15 energy's attenuation plan; and

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17 WHEREAS, the department of energy has demonstrated an
18 inability to carry out mandates of federal law in
19 connection with the site and has engendered a climate of
20 distrust, which negatively impacts the ability to reach a
21 solution to remedy a clear health hazard to the residents
22 of the Wind River Indian Reservation and residents of the
23 State of Wyoming.

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1 *NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE*
2 *LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WYOMING:*

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4 **Section 1.** Congress immediately provide for and
5 adequately fund increased monitoring and, as necessary,
6 commence active remediation of the Riverton Uranium Mill
7 Tailings site as requested in the proposal presented to the
8 department of energy by tribal officials in October, 2010.

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10 **Section 2.** Congress immediately enact legislation
11 requiring the department of energy to work cooperatively
12 with the other federal agencies, the tribal officials and
13 state and local government agencies to replace the current
14 department of energy model, develop increased monitoring
15 and determine as quickly as feasible the need to implement
16 a plan of active remediation of the Riverton Uranium Mill
17 Tailings site consistent with the proposal presented to the
18 department of energy by tribal officials in October, 2010.

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1 **Section 3.** That the Secretary of State of Wyoming
2 transmit copies of this resolution to the President of the
3 United States, to the President of the Senate and the
4 Speaker of the House of Representatives of the United
5 States Congress, to the Wyoming Congressional Delegation
6 and to the Secretary of the Department of Energy.

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(END)