

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; and

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

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

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

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

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

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20 *NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE*
21 *LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WYOMING:*

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23 **Section 1.** Congress immediately provide for and
24 adequately fund increased monitoring and, as necessary,

1 commence active remediation of the Riverton Uranium Mill
2 Tailings site as requested in the proposal presented to the
3 department of energy by tribal officials in October, 2010.

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

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15 **Section 3.** That the Secretary of State of Wyoming
16 transmit copies of this resolution to the President of the
17 United States, to the President of the Senate and the
18 Speaker of the House of Representatives of the United
19 States Congress, to the Wyoming Congressional Delegation
20 and to the Secretary of the Department of Energy.

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(END)