

(4) American Indian groups, especially the Pueblo Indians of the Rio Grande, developed trails for trade long before Europeans arrived;

(5) In 1598, Juan de Oñate led a Spanish military expedition along those trails to establish the northern portion of El Camino Real;

(6) During the Mexican National Period and part of the U.S. Territorial Period, El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro facilitated the emigration of people to New Mexico and other areas that would become the United States;

(7) The exploration, conquest, colonization, settlement, religious conversion, and military occupation of a large area of the borderlands was made possible by this route, whose historical period extended from 1598 to 1882;

(8) American Indians, European emigrants, miners, ranchers, soldiers, and missionaries used El Camino Real during the historic development of the borderlands. These travelers promoted cultural interaction among Spaniards, other Europeans, American Indians, Mexicans, and Americans;

(9) El Camino Real fostered the spread of Catholicism, mining, an extensive network of commerce, and ethnic and cultural traditions including music, folklore, medicine, foods, architecture, language, place names, irrigation systems, and Spanish law.

SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION.

Section 5 (a) of the National Trails System Act (16 U.S.C. 1244 (a)) is amended—

(1) by designating the paragraphs relating to the California National Historic Trail, the Pony Express National Historic Trail, and the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail as paragraphs (18), (19), and (20), respectively; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

“(21) EL CAMINO REAL DE TIERRA ADENTRO.—

“(A) El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro (the Royal Road of the Interior) National Historic Trail, a 404 mile long trail from the Rio Grande near El Paso, Texas to present San Juan Pueblo, New Mexico, as generally depicted on the maps entitled ‘United States Route: El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro’, contained in the report prepared pursuant to subsection (b) entitled ‘National Historic Trail Feasibility Study and Environmental Assessment: El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro, Texas-New Mexico’, dated March 1997.

“(B) MAP.—A map generally depicting the trail shall be on file and available for public inspection in the Office of the National Park Service, Department of Interior.

“(C) ADMINISTRATION.—The Trail shall be administered by the Secretary of the Interior.

“(D) LAND ACQUISITION.—No lands or interests therein outside the exterior boundaries of any federally administered area may be acquired by the Federal Government for El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro except with the consent of the owner thereof.

“(E) VOLUNTEER GROUPS; CONSULTATION.—The Secretary of the Interior shall—

“(i) encourage volunteer trail groups to participate in the development and maintenance of the trail; and

“(ii) consult with other affected Federal, State, and tribal agencies in the administration of the trail.

“(F) COORDINATION OF ACTIVITIES.—The Secretary of the Interior may coordinate with United States and Mexican public and non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, and, in consultation with the Secretary of State, the government of Mexico and its political subdivisions, for the purpose of exchanging trail information and research, fostering trail preservation and educational programs, providing technical as-

sistance, and working to establish an international historic trail with complementary preservation and education programs in each nation.”•

By Mr. BINGAMAN (for himself and Mr. DASCHLE):

S. 367. A bill to amend the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act to provide for partial restitution to individuals who worked in uranium mines, mills, or transport which provided uranium for the use and benefit of the United States Government, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

THE RADIATION EXPOSURE COMPENSATION IMPROVEMENT ACT

• Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I rise today with my colleague, Senator DASCHLE, to introduce the Radiation Exposure Compensation Improvement Act of 1999.

Mr. President, the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act, or RECA, was originally enacted in 1990 as a means of compensating the individuals who suffered from exposure to radiation as a result of the U.S. government's nuclear testing program and federal uranium mining activities. While the government can never fully compensate for the loss of a life or a reduction in the quality of life, RECA serves as a cornerstone for the national apology Congress extended to those adversely affected by the various radiation tragedies. In keeping with the spirit of that apology, the legislation I introduce today will further correct existing injustices and provide compassionate compensation for those whose lives and health were sacrificed as part of our nation's effort to win the cold war.

During the period of 1947 to 1961, the Federal Government controlled all aspects of the production of nuclear fuel. One such aspect was the mining of uranium in New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona, and Utah. Even though the Federal Government had adequate knowledge of the hazards involved in uranium mining, these miners, many of whom were Native Americans, were sent into inadequately ventilated mines with virtually no instruction regarding the dangers of ionizing radiation. These miners had no idea of those dangers. Consequently, they inhaled radon particles that eventually yielded high doses of ionizing radiation. As a result, these miners have a substantially elevated cancer rate and incidence of incapacitating respiratory disease. The health effects of uranium mining in the fifties and sixties remain the single greatest concern of many former uranium miners and millers and their families and friends.

In 1990, I was pleased to co-sponsor the original RECA legislation here in the Senate to provide compassionate compensation to uranium miners. I was very optimistic that after years of waiting, some degree of redress would be given to the thousands of miners in my state of New Mexico. Subsequently, I chaired the Senate oversight hearing on this issue in Shiprock, N.M. for the

Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee in 1993 and began to learn that while our efforts in 1990 were well intentioned they were not proving to be as effective as hoped. I additionally heard from many of my constituents that the program was not working as intended and that changes were necessary. To that end, I worked to facilitate changes in the regulatory and administrative areas.

Unfortunately, I have continued to hear from many of my constituents that the program still does not work as intended. I have received compelling letters of need from constituents telling of the many barriers in the current statute that lead to denial of compensation. Letters come from widows unable to access the current compensation. Miners tied to oxygen tanks, in respiratory distress or dying from cancer write to tell me how they have been denied compensation under the current act. Additionally, family members write of the pain of fathers who worked in uranium processing mills. They recount how their fathers came home covered in the “yellow cake” or uranium oxide that was floating in the air of the mills. The story of their fathers' cancers and painful breathing are vivid in these letters but the current act does not address their needs.

Their points are backed by others as well. In fact, my legislation incorporates findings by the Committee on the Biological Effects of Ionizing Radiation (BEIR) which has, since 1990, enlarged scientific evidence about radiogenic cancers and the health effects of radiation exposure. In other words, because of their good work, we know more now than we did in 1990 and we need to make sure the compensation we provide keeps pace with our medical knowledge. The government has the responsibility to compensate all those adversely affected and who have suffered health problems because they were not adequately informed of the risks they faced while mining, milling, and transporting uranium ore.

Mr. President, the legislation I am introducing today is a starting point for amending the current Act designed with specific elements to better serve the individuals who apply for compensation under the Act. The legislation is designed to simplify RECA and broaden the scope of individuals who are eligible for compensation.

Mr. President, I would like to cite several of the key provisions in the Radiation Exposure Compensation Improvement Act of 1999. Currently RECA covers those exposed to radiation released in underground uranium mines that were providing uranium for the primary use and benefit of the nuclear weapons program of the U.S. government. The legislation would make all uranium workers eligible for compensation including above ground miners, millers, and transport workers. I am very concerned about the need to expand compensation to the categories of workers not covered by the current