

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 of 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 subjected 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 subjected 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.