



TOM O'HALLERAN

1ST DISTRICT, ARIZONA

May 30, 2019

Administrator Mike Stoker
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region IX
75 Hawthorne St. (OPA-3)
San Francisco, CA 94105

Dear Administrator Stoker,

As the U.S. Representative for Arizona's First Congressional District, I am writing to express my concern about the status of the cleanup efforts for abandoned uranium mines (AUM) across the Navajo Nation. I believe the federal government, led by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), has a duty to ensure the full remediation of these hazardous uranium sites is done as expeditiously as possible.

With over 520 abandoned uranium mine sites from the Cold War era scattered across the Navajo Nation, it is critical the federal government use every resource at its disposal to remediate these mine sites to prevent further threats to watersheds, housing and most importantly- public health.

To more fully understand the additional resources EPA needs to complete this cleanup work, please provide detailed answers to the following questions:

- 1) While the EPA Region IX office currently has 18 Full Time Employees (FTE's) working on cleanup work, how many more additional staff is necessary to expedite cleanup efforts? Is an additional 17 staff positions feasible in the short-term?
- 2) With the EPA Region IX office located in San Francisco, has the EPA considered establishing a field office on or near the Navajo Nation to allow staff to face shorter travel times as they work on site remediation?
- 3) How effectively does the EPA communicate with the other federal agencies involved in the effort- the Department of Energy, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Indian Health Service, Centers for Disease Control, National Institutes of Health, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission- in coordinating cleanup responsibilities? What steps can be taken to improve this interagency coordination? Does the EPA need assistance in coordinating the agencies?

- 4) As the EPA prepares to issue a revised ten-year plan to continue abandoned uranium mine cleanup on the Navajo Nation, what specific benchmarks and timelines will be included in this plan?

Thank you in advance for addressing my concerns regarding this hazard impacting the Navajo people. Please don't hesitate to reach out to my office at 202-225-3361, with any questions. I look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom O'Halleran". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tom O'Halleran
Member of Congress