

Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20510

September 17, 2021

Dr. Norman Sharpless  
Director, National Cancer Institute  
9000 Rockville Pike Bethesda, Maryland 20892

Dear Dr. Sharpless,

We are writing to request that the National Cancer Institute (NCI) publish analyses of the radiation fallout from atomic weapons testing in Nevada and New Mexico so that Congressional deliberations regarding the reauthorization and proposed expansions of the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA) program may be properly informed by all existing evidence-based data.

It is our understanding that in 1997 the National Cancer Institute released data tables of estimated exposures and thyroid doses from I-131 by age group and county.<sup>1</sup> This data greatly assisted the creation of the Downwinders of Utah Archive, which was compiled by researchers at the University of Utah and “presents an in-depth study of the nuclear detonations, radioactive fallout, and events, which have resulted in devastating effects for Utah’s “Downwinder” population.”<sup>2</sup>

Unfortunately, these researchers have informed us that the data tables that were previously released and greatly informed the production of their work are no longer accessible due to NCI’s recalibration of the data, which began in 2016. The inability to access this data makes it nearly impossible for the continuance of studies to further determine which geographical areas of the United States may have been negatively affected by radiation fallout from the Nevada and Trinity atomic weapons testing sites.

As you are likely aware, the RECA program is of great importance to our constituencies who either personally suffer from, or have family members who have suffered from, cancers and other diseases that developed due to exposure of radiation fallout from above-ground atomic testing. Publishing these data tables will ensure that Congress’s reauthorization of the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act is properly informed and narrowly tailored to best meet the needs of those who are entitled to compensation due to infirmities that fell upon them due to the federal government’s decision to conduct above-ground atomic weapons testing. Because the RECA program will soon expire, on July 7, 2022, we ask that the recalibrated data tables be published

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<sup>1</sup> National Cancer Institute, 1997. *Data Tables of Estimated Exposures and Thyroid Doses from I-131 by Age Group and County*.

<sup>2</sup> The University of Utah, 2021. *Downwinders of Utah Archive*.  
<https://lib.utah.edu/services/geospatial/downwinders/>

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no later than October 29, 2021. As you work to fulfill this request, we request a briefing for our staff on the reasons for recalibration of this data, its progress, and the data being used to inform the analysis. Please contact Senator Lee's staffer Ryan Neuhaus ([ryan\\_neuhaus@lee.senate.gov](mailto:ryan_neuhaus@lee.senate.gov)) to coordinate.

Sincerely,



Michael S. Lee  
United States Senator



Chris Stewart  
United States Congressman

Cc: Xavier Becerra, Secretary of Health and Human Services.

Cc: Merrick Garland, Attorney General of the United States.