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General Comment

Dear NRC:

I am an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation Tribe and a community member of the Four Corners Region.

My comments highly reflect the values of our valued traditional systems that prioritize our lands that need to be protected and maintained for future generations. As is, all tribes of North America are perpetually targeted by the federal government and environmental policies that exploit, and destroy without intentional and meaningful change toward preventing future developments. We have seen the fallouts from Uranium mining and hauling to other minerals without considering the longitudinal impacts of and consequential health effects.

I would like to reference the December 2023 Special Report by Scientific American titled, “The New Nuclear Age: Inside America’s plan to remake its atomic arsenal” that covers areas of the nuclear fallout that will have devastating consequences and effects when Tribes are forced and ultimately pressured to succumb, through eminent domain and preemption laws, to federal control. The firings and research is a call to bring a moral lens about project proposals that leads with “making us all safer”. We have seen the nuclear arms race shaped history and we need to pay attention to our continent’s global contributions when a nuclear fallout will happen (not if). As such, I implore NRC to reread the Special Report and deeply reflect on the importance of the “perverse strategic purpose”. With new research and designs about the nuclear fallouts will have irreversible effects on every American, especially Native Tribes since many of the minerals and elements are continuously being extracted and exploited leaving Native Indigenous peoples to live with the health consequences that we still live with today.

We need to lean on the current research outcomes and designs to inform us now and the future. Our communities cannot continue to “feed the world” with unsustainable practices for money that is short-lived. Our lands are much more valuable than today’s economy and we need to place more emphasis toward protections against exploitations.

When I learned about the Nuclear fallouts, it made me wonder how is it that this is not situated and uplifted for people’s knowledge. Instead, the priority is to hide these facts and issues, using money to tempt and inspire tribal leaders.

Agencies such as the NRC need to make and ensure they are leading with values that dismantles a legacy of harmed proposals. Moreover, our tribal nations have been researched to death. We already know the poor policies of the past and only a 100 years are we seeing the generational health effects and changes to our DNA and RNA. We have learned that manipulation and coercion cannot be the model for community engagement.

Our communities and nation deserve to be treated with respect and compassion because the lands, Mother Earth, is sacred and logic need to be challenged by our humanity.

Respectfully submitted,

Christina Tomchee