



RADIATION EXPOSURE COMPENSATION REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2026

PURPOSE

The *Radiation Exposure Compensation Reauthorization Act of 2026* strengthens and expands the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA) by broadening eligibility, increasing compensation, and enhancing access and health services for individuals harmed by radiation exposure from the U.S. atomic weapons program.

KEY PROVISIONS

- **Expands eligibility** to additional radiation-exposed communities, including individuals in Guam, Colorado, Montana, all of Nevada, and all of Arizona; downwinders exposed to residual radiation from atmospheric testing; onsite participants and cleanup veterans; and communities affected by Manhattan Project waste.
- **Creates pathways for additional coverage** by granting the President discretionary authority and establishing a process to designate new classes of individuals through a petition process.
- **Increases compensation and improves access** by providing \$150k compensation payments for all classes; authorizing reimbursement for medical expenses in addition to payments made to Downwinders, Onsite Participants, and Manhattan Project Waste survivors; and reducing barriers to filing claims through authorization of affidavits and claims to be submitted on behalf of another.
- **Expands eligible disease coverage and program access** by adding additional cancers and diseases; extending the program fund authorization and claims deadlines by 15 years, and supporting radiation screening and education programs, including mobile clinics for rural communities.
- **Advances research and oversight** by directing studies on the health impacts of radiation exposure, including impacts on the Northern Mariana Islands, descendants of affected individuals, and other exposed populations.
- **Protects individuals filing claims** by retroactively applying expanded eligibility provisions to July 1, 2025, ensuring individuals are not required to restart the claims process,

SIGNIFICANCE

Enacted in 1990, RECA provides one-time compensation to individuals who developed cancer or other specified illnesses after exposure to radiation resulting from U.S. atmospheric nuclear weapons testing. Although Pub. L. 119-21 reauthorized and expanded RECA through 2028, the program continues to impose restrictive eligibility criteria, exclude exposed communities, create complicated documentation requirements, and provide limited support for the long-term costs of care.

The *Radiation Exposure Compensation Reauthorization Act of 2026* addresses these longstanding gaps by expanding eligibility, improving access to claims, increasing compensation, and strengthening services—helping ensure that Americans living with the lasting effects of radiation exposure receive the recognition, support, and care they deserve.