

SENATE RESOLUTION

8701

By Senators Hasegawa, Saldaña, Conway, and Wagoner

1           WHEREAS, The United States Government tested 67 atmospheric  
2 nuclear weapons in the Marshall Islands from 1946-1958 during the  
3 time that the United States was the administering authority for the  
4 Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands; and

5           WHEREAS, Much of the plutonium that served as the energy source  
6 for the nuclear weapons detonated in the Marshall Islands was  
7 processed at Hanford, thus creating a link between the Marshallese  
8 people and the people of Washington state; and

9           WHEREAS, The "Bravo" test on Bikini Atoll on March 1, 1954, was  
10 the equivalent of 1,000 Hiroshima-sized bombs, and the Marshallese  
11 people experienced the equivalent of 1.6 Hiroshima-sized bombs every  
12 day for the twelve years of the testing program; and

13           WHEREAS, The Marshallese people and their islands became a living  
14 laboratory for nuclear weapons designers to better understand the  
15 impacts of radioactive weaponry on human beings and their  
16 environment, including the top secret biomedical program, Project  
17 4.1; and

18           WHEREAS, Project 4.1 established an internment camp on Kwajalein  
19 Atoll for the people exposed to radioactive fallout from the Bravo  
20 test, and established numerous biomedical studies, such as the  
21 purposeful resettlement of Marshallese people on radioactive islands  
22 to study human uptake of radiation from the environment; and

1       WHEREAS, The Marshallese experience numerous challenges today  
2 connected to the United States nuclear legacy, such as communities  
3 that cannot return to their ancestral lands because of lingering  
4 contamination, those who were prematurely resettled on contaminated  
5 lands, and health care issues related to radiation exposure and  
6 diaspora, including cancer and other radiogenic illnesses; and

7       WHEREAS, There are no oncologists in the Marshall Islands today,  
8 nor is there a cancer care treatment facility, and thus the  
9 Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands is hoping to build  
10 relationships with Washington state's world class cancer research and  
11 treatment facilities; and

12       WHEREAS, The termination of the Trust Territory of the Pacific  
13 Islands in 1986 resulted in the Compact of Free Association between  
14 the United States and the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the  
15 Federated States of Micronesia, and later Palau, collectively known  
16 as the "COFA" nations; and

17       WHEREAS, As a result of the unique and historical relationship  
18 between the citizens of the former United States trust territory,  
19 residents under the COFA treaty currently serve in every branch of  
20 the United States armed forces, and have the right to enter, live,  
21 and work in the United States without a visa; and

22       WHEREAS, COFA community members reside in numerous counties  
23 across Washington state and are advocating for equity in terms of  
24 eligibility for federal assistance programs for other legal migrants,  
25 such as Medicaid and food stamps; and

26       WHEREAS, The Marshallese people are consummate survivors whose  
27 culture continues to thrive, including the ground zero communities of  
28 Bikini and Enewetak who remain some of the most gifted open ocean  
29 navigators, voyagers, and weavers in the world; and

30       WHEREAS, The upcoming March 1st anniversary of the Bravo  
31 detonation is a national holiday and day of mourning and remembrance  
32 for the Republic of the Marshall Islands;

33       NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Senate pause to  
34 acknowledge the painful and damaging legacy of United States nuclear  
35 weapons testing in the Marshall Islands, and stand in support of our  
36 Marshallese community members across Washington State on the March  
37 1st anniversary of the Bravo detonation.

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