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INTERMOUNTAIN WEST URANIUM SUMMIT

Calls for participation in our

First Cross-Border Anti-Nuclear Action July 15-16

“Evidence shows that uranium kills”

ALBUQUERQUE, New Mexico -- Intermountain West Uranium Summit participants are inviting affinity groups everywhere to take part on July 15-16 in our first Cross-Border Anti-Nuclear Action (CBAN), commemorating the anniversary of the largest radioactive accident in U.S. history and the explosion of the first atomic bomb.

Members are holding events in our locales to raise awareness that the entire nuclear industry, from cradle to grave, is one deadly chain. Beginning with extraction of uranium, proceeding to refinement of yellow cake, through transportation on public routes, operation of nuclear power plants, and weapons manufacture, to waste disposal issues, the nuclear process releases lethal radiation to air, land and water. Its history is fraught with accidents, illness and threats to life on earth. It must stop before it kills more humans and other living things.

The Red Water Pond Road Community, at ground-zero for uranium mining in the Navajo Nation since the 1950s, is holding an annual sunrise prayer walk on July 15 to launch the CBAN Action. Located between three Superfund sites where mining companies abandoned their cancer-causing excavation for taxpayers to clean up, this community endures the fallout of the largest radioactive materials release in U.S. history.

Known as the Church Rock Spill, the disastrous uranium tailings pond dam break on July 16, 1979, dumped more than 1,000 tons of solid waste and some 94 million gallons of radioactive liquid into the Rio Puerco channel, which carried it downstream past Gallup, New Mexico, and all the way to Winslow, Arizona.

“Please join us in prayer and in organizing actions in your own communities on this weekend,” said Teracita Keyanna with Red Water Pond Road Community Association. “Help raise awareness that native peoples, whose lands have been appropriated and desecrated for the purpose of arms that kill and energy that doesn’t benefit us, are suffering grave environmental injustices at the hands of the military industrial complex.”

Since 2007, the EPA has been engaged in removing layers of contaminated dirt from this Superfund site created by United Nuclear Corp. Contractors are scraping off six inches of soil at a time, to dispose of it and restore Diné homelands to federally-established standards.

The Tularosa Basin Downwinders Consortium, which has been gathering data for a dozen years in hopes of compensation for cancer and disease suffered by survivors of the July 16, 1945 Trinity Test of the atomic bomb in New Mexico.

It is observing the anniversary of the massive radiation exposure incident this year at the site as part of the CBAN Action. “We are speaking up for those who have been silenced by the bomb and for those who are suffering now,” said co-founder Tina Cordova. She hopes the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act will extend more benefits to people in the area.

The uranium mining accident and the atomic bomb test comprise the opposite ends of the nuclear power chain, which humanity must break,” said Susan Gordon, coordinator, for the Multicultural Alliance for a Safe Environment. “In between, there are many other aspects that negatively affect other geographic areas. We hope you will help make the CBAN action a success by spreading the word with promotion and outreach on aspects that relate to your community.”

Uranium from the Intermountain West has ended up all over the place, including the Department of Energy’s Savannah River Site for repurposing spent nuclear fuel for military ends, resulting in what the federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission considers “significant quantities of radioactive waste” in substandard storage facilities.

The Southeast Indigenous Center is set to commemorate the CBAN Action weekend by taking the issue to the UN High-Level Political Forum on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Fearing that the failing facilities at the 55-year-old South Carolina site will be accepting more waste due to lack of permanent disposal solutions, “We will be there with one message that is short and clear,” the center’s Lori Johnston said: “Evidence shows that uranium kills.”

Another radioactive waste dump, operated by the Canadian corporation Energy Fuels Inc., in connection with its conventional White Mesa Uranium Mill, is disposing material from all across the United States in obsolete impoundments, close to the controversial Bears Ears National Monument in southern Utah.

The Environmental Protection Agency has determined that communities and lands within an 80-km radius, including the White Mesa Band of the Ute Mountain Ute Indian Tribe, are threatened by the dump’s radon-222 emissions, which exceed Clean Air Act standards. Among affected towns are White Mesa, Bluff, Blanding, and Monticello, Utah.

As hearings continue over expired permitting, grassroots tribal members of the White Mesa Concerned Community organization held a protest and spiritual walk in May with the help of Greenaction and are supporting the CBAN Action to raise funds and public pressure to close the facility.

“We are worried about our health and the water in White Mesa,” said organizer Yolanda Badback. “Our people have lived in this area for many generations before the uranium mill came. If our water gets contaminated what will happen to us?”

The Black Hills Chapter of Dakota Rural Action and the Black Hills Clean Water Alliance, which are fighting proposed uranium mining in South Dakota that would result in radioactive waste going to White Mesa, are holding public information and outreach booths on July 8 at the Outdoor University in Rapid City to advertise the issues around the Intermountain West that the CBAN Action will highlight.

Also among the cross-border problems they will address is one in northern Saskatchewan, Canada, where the Committee for Future Generations is urging cancellation of plans for converting half of Patterson Lake into an open pit uranium mine.

“Everyone is welcome to join us to protect Patterson Lake from becoming another radioactive toxic sacrifice zone,” the organization announced. It held a Prayer Paddle June 11-14 for Patterson Lake, known to the Denesuline people as Horáchághi tue, for its clean waters.

“There are only two uses for uranium -- fueling nuclear reactors or producing material used in bombs, and all uranium leads to high-level radioactive waste,” said Intermountain West Uranium Summit participant Gordon Edwards of the Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility.

“We have to share this information. It’s important to tell these stories,” he said. The nuclear chain will break “only if public pressure forces regulations.”

We welcome you to take part in our Cross-Border Anti-Nuclear Action – CBAN 2017. Publish this announcement and contact us to let us know what you’re doing to commemorate the event. You can also sign and circulate the attached Intermountain West Uranium Summit Declaration. Thank you!

For more information, please contact:

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The Intermountain West Uranium Summit is a forum for coordinating grassroots resistance to nuclear development. We first met in Rapid City, Lakota Territory, to celebrate World Water Day in March 2015. Our second meeting was at San Carlos Apache Tribe’s Apache Summit in November 2016. CBAN 2017 is our first joint action. PLEASE JOIN US!