

INTERFAITH STEWARDS OF CREATION DOCKETED

P. O. Box 3682

USNRC

Gallup, New Mexico 87305

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PETITION

OFFICE OF SECRETARY  
RULEMAKING AND  
ADJUDICATION

As people of Faith, we view the Universe as an ongoing self-revelation of the Creator, sacred because of the Divine Presence. It is God Who first shaped the cosmos and enabled all forms of life to emerge. Humankind, created in the image and likeness of God, is entrusted with a sacred vocation to participate in ongoing Creation, reflecting God's love for the Earth and ensuring the continuation of nature for present and future generations as God intended.

With this sacred view of the Earth and of the Universe, we strive to live out our covenant relationship with our Creator by being responsible stewards and caretakers of Earth, its living and natural resources.

It is from deeply held religious beliefs that we raise our voices in protest of Hydro Resources, Inc.'s proposed in-situ leach uranium mining projects at Church Rock and Crownpoint, New Mexico, which invade and irreversibly contaminate the only pristine water reserves and aquifer on which over 50,000 people and local communities of this region are completely dependent.

We are alarmed at the absence of any discussion or recognition by state and federal government representatives or corporation executives of any serious moral, ethical and environmental justice issues surrounding the proposed uranium mining projects. Economic and political arguments in support of such uranium mining pale into utter insignificance in the face of wide-scale irreversible contamination and environmental destruction that will adversely impact all human, animal and plant life for thousands of years to come. An aquifer is gone for 10,000 years once humans change it into poison. There is no technology that can fix it! Human, animal and plant DNA are loaded with intelligence and information. Toxic chemicals and radiation go to the center of the cell to the DNA and disrupt it forever. We know this is linked to increases in birth defects, mental retardation, miscarriages and multiple strains of cancer that appear from exposure to radiation. (See Brian Swimme, Ph.D., Physicist and Thomas Berry, Ph.D., The Universe Story (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1992); Edward Goldsmith et al., The Earth Report: The Essential Guide to Global Ecological Issues, (London: Mitchell Beazley Publishers, 1988); Samuel S. Epstein et al., Hazardous Waste in America: Our Number One Environmental Crisis, (San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1983); Paul Ehrlich and Anne Ehrlich, Extinction: Causes and Consequences of Disappearances of Species, (New York: Random House, 1981).

As Interfaith Stewards of Creation, our Faith compels us to voice strong opposition to HRI's proposed uranium mining projects at Church Rock and Crownpoint, NM. We urge you to incorporate President Clinton's **Executive Order 12898** on Environmental Justice into the ASLB proceedings, thereby fulfilling the Trust Responsibility of the U.S. Government (via the **Treaty of 1868**) to the Navajo Nation.

We invoke our inalienable human rights and submit this Petition on behalf of present and future generations so that we will not be forced:

- to drink water that has been contaminated by Thorium-230, Radium-226, Arsenic, Molybdenum, Selenium, Strontium, and other heavy metals;
- to breathe air that has Radon gas and other toxic emissions;
- to live on land that has been poisoned for thousands of years;

SECY-EHD-005

20128

- to have sheep, cattle and other domestic livestock eat, drink and breathe radioactive particles that will eventually cause sickness and disease to them AND to humans;
- to allow Dine' archeological sites, burial sites, unbilical cord sites, medicinal and food gathering sites, and ceremonial offering sites to be disturbed by HRI's project;
- to suffer from release of pure "yellowcake" onto our highways and into our environment when there is an "accident."

We continue to pray for all those with decision-making responsibilities in the deliberations taking place on this case, that each one will be guided by the Divine Spirit in order to make the wisest decisions for present and future generations, as well as our inter-species planetary community of Life.

\* \* \*

**I SUPPORT THE ABOVE PETITION to PREVENT URANIUM MINING in NEW MEXICO and on THE NAVAJO RESERVATION**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Date</u>
Breze Luetke-Stahlman	515 East Capitol Street, SE WDC 20003	3/22/99
Matthew Thomas Hunt	30 N. Brainard Naperville, IL 60566	3/23/99
Michael J. Stahl	30 N. Brainard Naperville, IL 60566	3/23/99
J. Anderson	6 Altors Ct. Brookline MA 02446	"
Darren D. Davis	30 W. Brainard Naperville, IL 60566	3/23/99

Please return this signed Petition by **January 30, 1999** to: **Interfaith Stewards of Creation, P.O. Box 3682, Gallup, NM 87305. Copies of all Petitions will be sent by ISC to:**

Administrative Judge Peter B. Block  
 Presiding Officer, Atomic Safety and Licensing Board  
 U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission

Secretary of Energy Bill Richardson

Bruce Babbitt, Secretary, Department of Interior

Carol M. Browner, Secretary, EPA

Senator Pete Domenici

Senator Tom Udall

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Kevin Gover, Assistant Secretary,  
 Bureau of Indian Affairs

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<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Date</u>
Dave Robinson	532 W 8 <sup>th</sup> ST ERIE, PA 16502	3/20/99
Vlad Takinets	1300 Pennsylvania Ave. Washington DC	3/20/99
Aivudai Nambi	Po Box 765, POTSDAM, NY-12676	3/20/99
Brad Morse	3900 16 <sup>th</sup> St. NW #203 Washington, DC	3/20/99
Jim Colman	107 Cienega St, NM 87501	3/20/99
Beatrice Brailsford	310 E Center Pocatello ID 83201	3.20.99
Marylia Kelley	5720 East Ave #116 Livermore, CA 94550	3/20/99
Lynn Pries	213 N. River Rd, Naperville, IL 60540	3/23/99
Joseph C. Hill	D.N. Braumard Naperville IL 60566	3/23/99
Ashena Adams	4201 Butterworth Place, S.W. D. C. 20016	3/23/99

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<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Date</u>
Linda Jackson	1105 Dickerson SE. #2	3-7-99
Rick Rothschilder	3820 Monterey Dr. Honolulu HI 96816	3-17-99
Rebecca Becker	1037 Ritchie Rd Grover Beach CA 93433	3-17-99
JONATHAN PARTNEY	16844 Bollinger Pacific Palisades 90272	3-17-99
ANDY HARRIS	2065 High At SE Astoria OR 97102	3-17-99
John Burroughs	5815 Liebig Ave Apt 2, Bronx NY 10471	3-17-99
Angie's Gilbert	2314 Delancey St. Phila PA 19125	3/18/99
Ranula S. Meidell	4440 Gates head Bay Oxnard CA 93035	3/19/99
Charles D. Ferguson II	513 6TH ST., NE, WASHINGTON, DC 20002	3/20/99
Jennifer Aldrich	8170 SW Glencreek Ct. Portland, OR 97223	3/20/99

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# INTERFAITH STEWARDS of CREATION

P.O. BOX 457

CHURCH ROCK, NM 87311

505/488-5520

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## ACTION ALERT!

On Tuesday, March 23, 1999 beginning at 10:00 AM, a Protest Demonstration will convene at the Headquarters of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) in Rockville, MD at 1 Whiteflint Metro Station. Leading the event will be a representative of the Dineh (Navajo) who reside on or near the proposed sites on the Navajo reservation at Church Rock and Crownpoint, NM; the start up of the In-situ leach (ISL) uranium mining operation is at the Church Rock site, one (1) of two (2) Superfund sites on the National Priority List in New Mexico that has never undergone any clean up. Approximately 30 individuals and organizations have committed themselves to this direct action event, but that is not enough...we need your help at this time.

First, we ask for your prayers and offerings for The People and all uranium victims. We also are asking that you take the time to respond to this Action Alert and phone, write, fax and e-mail your concerns to the NRC Allegations Coordinator **Robert O'Connell** (Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards, 11545 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD 20852) at 1-800-233-3497 or 301/415-7877; **Peter Bloch**, Presiding Officer: 301/415-7453, 5599(F), pbb@nrc.gov; **Document Control Desk**: [same address], 301/415-2066, 1107(F).

### Areas of Concern:

\* ISL uranium mining is dangerous and unsafe for humans, animals and the land as the levels of contamination will exceed the previous exposure from the 1979 spill of over 98 million gallons of hot radioactive tailings into the Puerco River--at 2,000 feet below the surface, the unproven ISL method will poison our sole source of drinking water.

\* The due process rights of the Dineh have been violated under the NRC rules and regulations by the NRC and the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board (ASLB) as both parties are in conflict-of-interest and in cahoots not only with Hydro Resources, Inc. but with every other corporation that applies for a license to mine uranium. HRI was given a license without public hearings.

\* The traditional Dineh Way of Life and religion is once again threatened by the proposed ISL project and has not been incorporated into the proceedings although many of The People do not read, write, or speak the English language, yet at meeting after hearing the message they speak is the same: "Do not do this harm to our Mother Earth and to our children's future--we do not want the HRI mine to open up on our land".

\* Existing levels of radioactive contamination from past mining activities are not addressed in the Final Environmental Impact Statement. The current levels are above federal limits yet they are called natural "background radiation" by HRI and the NRC who do not have any intention of incorporating Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice to counter their imposed impacts.

**Support Eastern Navajo Dineh Uranium Against Uranium Mining (ENDUAM)**

P.O. Box 471 Crownpoint, NM 87313 \* 505/786-5209, 7275(F) \* redmesa@hotmail.com

# Local group finds a common cause

By S.J. Ludescher  
Staff Writer

GALLUP — Some local people found they have two common bonds — Christianity and a desire to lobby against the re-opening of uranium mines in Crownpoint and Church Rock.

They've joined together to form a grassroots lobby group. "Our challenge is to put out real information and disturb people," RoseMarie Cecchini said.

The Interfaith Stewards of Creation see themselves as caretakers

The Independent—Gallup, N.M.—Tuesday, March 2, 1999.

and stewards of the earth. They are striving to bring the viewpoint of Native Americans into the forefront of the arguments against the mines and will send their message to Washington, D.C., later this month.

"It is from deeply held religious beliefs that we raise our voices in protest of Hydro Resources, Inc's proposed uranium mining project which invade and irreversibly contaminate the only pristine water reserves and aquifer on which 50,000 people and local communities of

**See Local group finds, Page 2**

## Continued from page 1

this region are completely dependent," says the mission statement.

The ISC said it is alarmed at the absence of any discussion or recognition by state and federal government or corporation executives of any serious moral, ethical, and environmental justice issues surrounding the proposed uranium mining projects.

A proclamation declaring the Navajo Nation as a "nuclear-free zone" was recently presented to newly-elected Navajo Nation President Kelsey Begaye. The document has not yet been signed.

"We want to hold companies accountable," Catholic Charities Sister Betty Marie Dunkell said. "They attack countries for making bombs. Why don't they attack the companies that are making poisons — using the poisons to nuke those countries?"

"And, we want to remind the native people of their heritage. We want to re-direct to the spiritual and religious — take care of the earth —

for future generations," Mervyn Tilden, citizen lobbyist and writer from Church Rock, said.

"In taking care of our environment, a lot comes back to the taxpayer," Tilden said. "It has a lot to do with our value systems. What's going to happen to people if these companies are allowed to succeed?"

Tilden emphasized part of the Navajo philosophy regarding uranium. "We've been told by the medicine man that uranium is to be left in the ground. If we don't adhere to these principles, we are in trouble. Some of my people call it 'Mother's Earth Poison,'" Tilden said.

"Radiation is natural but when you take it out of its natural state, there's trouble," Tilden continued. "Uranium is protected underground for a reason.

"Energy companies don't understand, except by global warming. They make problems for themselves."

"The economic people came in like the conquerors and indoctrinated through the boarding school sys-

# Why Navajos Resist New Uranium Mining

**ENDAUM members say they are amazed that NRC seems to agree with an approach that will leave high levels of a known human carcinogen in their only source of drinking water.**

After the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) issued its *Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)* on three proposed ISL (in situ leach) mines<sup>1</sup> in November 1994, several people from the Crownpoint area met to discuss their concerns. They were alarmed by the prospect of a uranium mine and processing plant being located near their homes, one that was to use their only source of drinking water to conduct the mining. Even though the NRC had taken more than two-and-a-half years to prepare the *DEIS*, the agency gave the public only 30 days to write comments and request a hearing. So in December 1994, several residents and local and regional organizations wrote NRC expressing their concerns and requesting an evidentiary hearing.<sup>2</sup>

In January and February 1995, residents from communities throughout the Eastern Agency<sup>3</sup> of the Navajo Nation in northwestern New Mexico held two community meetings at the Crownpoint Chapter House. The meetings were attended by about 130 people who, on February 2, 1995, adopted a resolution forming *Eastern Navajo Diné Against Uranium Mining*.

tem," Dunkell said. "Silver doesn't contaminate. But, uranium and coal do, and people don't get well."

"Impoverished people are to the point of being willing to trade their lives off for only 10-12 days of work in the mine. The officials get fatter wallets and our land gets trashed," Tilden said.

The ISC is circulating a petition to present in Washington, D.C., on behalf of present and future generations so that people will not be forced:

- To drink water that has been contaminated by thorium-230, radium-226, arsenic, molybdenum, selenium, strontium, and other heavy metals;
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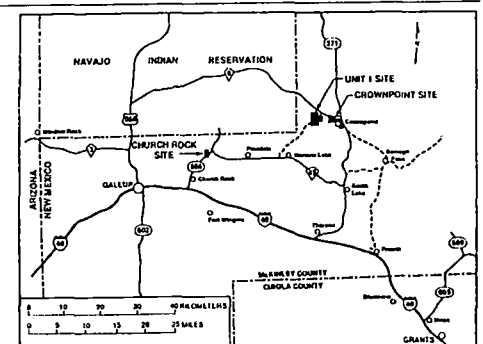
Later that same month, ENDAUM filed an amended petition with the NRC listing the reasons why the mines should not be built or allowed to operate. Many ENDAUM members testified at three public meetings held by the NRC in late February 1995. The vast majority of local residents who made statements at those meetings were opposed to the mines or had serious concerns about them. Even the five Navajo members of the New Mexico Legislature wrote to the NRC expressing concerns about the need for Navajo-language educational programs in Navajo communities affected by the mines and urging the NRC to slow down its review process.

## ENDAUM'S PRINCIPAL CONCERNS

- The 12-member Crownpoint Volunteer Fire Department usually has only six firefighters on duty at any one time, and their closest assistance is from the Thoreau Volunteer Fire Department 25 miles away;
- The Crownpoint office of the Navajo Police Department has only two officers on duty at any one time, and only one of those officers is an emergency medical technician (EMT);
- Only two or three of the 10 EMTs assigned to the IHS Crownpoint Service Unit are on duty at any one time, and none are paramedics;
- The hospital itself has only 20 beds, only seven emergency room beds, only two doctors and one nurse on duty at night and on weekends, and no separate decontamination room;
- Only one local firefighter has completed an 80-hour hazardous materials training course, and no one in the community has a complete "hazmat" protective suit;
- The local airstrip is inaccessible in bad weather, necessitating ground transportation of critically ill or injured patients; and
- Electric power outages are frequent, forcing the hospital to rely on backup generators a few times every month.



This map shows the locations of HRT's proposed uranium solution mines near the Navajo communities of Church Rock and Crownpoint. The dot-dash line in the upper left corner indicates the 1880 Executive Order boundary of the Navajo Reservation. The Eastern Agency of the Navajo Nation extends southward and eastward from the reservation boundary and includes the communities of Borrego Bass, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Previtt, Smith Lake and Thoreau. Underground uranium mining was conducted in the Church Rock, Pinedale, Mariano Lake and Smith Lake chapters in the 1950s, '60s, '70s and '80s. (Graphic from the Final Environmental Impact Statement, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, February 1997, p. 1-2.)





UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

In the Matter of  
HYDRO RESOURCES, INC.

Docket No.(s) 40-8968-ML

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that copies of the foregoing PET. OF INTERFAITH STEWARDS... have been served upon the following persons by U.S. mail, first class, except as otherwise noted and in accordance with the requirements of 10 CFR Sec. 2.712.

Office of Commission Appellate  
Adjudication  
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Washington, DC 20555

Administrative Judge  
Peter B. Bloch  
Presiding Officer  
Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel  
Mail Stop - T-3 F23  
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Washington, DC 20555

Administrative Judge  
Thomas D. Murphy  
Special Assistant  
Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel  
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Steven J. Bloxham, Esq.  
Navajo Nation Department of Justice  
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Window Rock, AZ 86515

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Mitchell Capitan, President  
ENDAUM  
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Roderick Ventura  
Samuel D. Gollis  
DNA - People's Legal Services, Inc.  
P.O. Box 306  
Window Rock, AZ 86515

Dated at Rockville, Md. this  
23 day of March 1999

*Adrian T. Byrdson*  
Office of the Secretary of the Commission