



## PRESS RELEASE

### **Local Faith Groups To Host an Interfaith Vigil Marking the Anniversary of the Trinity Nuclear Detonation Impacted Communities and Religious Leaders Call for Nuclear Abolition**

ALBUQUERQUE, NM – Tuesday, July 9, 2024– IMMEDIATE RELEASE - To commemorate the anniversary of the first detonation of an atomic weapon in 1945 at the nearby Trinity Test Site, an interfaith coalition is hosting "From Reflection to Action: An Interfaith Remembrance of the Trinity Test" to pray, reflect, and discuss the impact of the Trinity Test on New Mexico and beyond. It will be held at St. John XXIII Catholic Community, 4831 Tramway Ridge Dr. NE in Albuquerque. The free public event is **Sunday, July 14**, and doors open at 2 p.m. Pre-registration is encouraged, and the event will be live-streamed.

Seventy-nine years ago, the government did not warn or evacuate the estimated tens of thousands of people living within a 50-mile radius of the Trinity Test blast. "We don't ask IF we'll get cancer; we ask WHEN it will be our turn," says Tina Cordova, event co-organizer and founder of the Tularosa Basin Downwinders Consortium.

In 1990, Congress passed the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act, which only compensated downwinders in a limited area near the Nevada Test Site. Survivors of the world's first atomic bomb in New Mexico, who are disproportionately Native and Hispanic, have never been eligible. The benefits provided by this program ended June 7, 2024.

On March 7, the U.S. Senate passed S.3853 to expand and extend the RECA program. If passed in the House and signed into law by the President, the RECA Amendment would finally recognize and compensate previously excluded downwinders in New Mexico, Idaho, Montana, Colorado, Guam, Utah, Nevada, Arizona, and the Post 71 uranium workers. Event organizers are asking concerned citizens to call House Speaker Mike Johnson (202.225.4000) and urge him to allow a vote on S. 3853. This bill has been endorsed by 15 [national faith communities](#), including the [U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops](#).

Among the scheduled speakers for the anniversary commemoration is Most Reverend John C. Wester, Archbishop of Santa Fe, who supports the RECA amendments and action to prevent nuclear war from happening again. "We can no longer deny or ignore the extremely dangerous predicament of our human family," says Wester. "We are in a new nuclear arms race far more dangerous than the first, and I believe we need to rejuvenate a sustained, serious conversation about universal, verifiable nuclear disarmament." Additional speakers include Dr. Ira Helfand (International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons), Dr. Myrriah Gomez (author of "Nuclear Nuevo México: Colonialism and the Effects of the Nuclear Industrial Complex on Nuevomexicanos"), Dr. Hirokazu Miyazaki (Professor of Anthropology, Northwestern University), Jay Coghlan (Executive Director, Nuclear Watch New Mexico), Danny Hall (Director of Public Affairs for Soka Gakkai International-USA), Don Hancock (Nuclear Waste Program Director, Southwest Research and Information Center), Eddie Laiche (Students for Nuclear Disarmament), and Lawrence Juanico (uranium miner and member of Laguna Pueblo). Speakers will cover the human and environmental impacts of nuclear testing in New Mexico, the growing national grassroots Back from the Brink movement, how young people are engaging these issues, and the role of hope and faith as we face growing nuclear threats.

The event is organized by the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, Interfaith Power and Light (NM-EP), New Mexico Conference of Churches, Nuclear Watch New Mexico, Soka Gakkai International-USA, and Tularosa Basin Downwinders Consortium. For more information, call the Archdiocese of Santa Fe's Office of Social Justice and Respect Life at 505.831.8205. Pre-register and find the live stream link at [form.jotform.com/241400030658141](http://form.jotform.com/241400030658141). ###