SENATE RESOLUTION

8701

By Senators Hasegawa, Saldaña, Conway, and Wagoner

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I, Brad Hendrickson, Secretary of the Senate,

do hereby certify that this is a true and

correct copy of Senate Resolution 8701,

adopted by the Senate

February 27, 2020

BRAD HENDRICKSON

Secretary of the Senate