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To: Ohio House of Representatives
77 S. High Street, #12
Columbus, Oh 43215

Subject: Testimonial and Endorsement for HB 414 – To declare July 16, National Atomic Veteran’s Day

My name is David Crawford. I am the Ohio Co-Commander for the National Association of Atomic Veterans (NAAV). I reside in Tipp City, just north of Dayton. NAAV represents thousands of Atomic Veterans nationwide, many of them here in the great state of Ohio. This testimonial serves as an endorsement supporting Ohio House Bill 414 to enact section 5.243 of the Revised Code to designate July 16 as "National Atomic Veterans Day" in Ohio.

NAAV was founded in August, 1979 by the late Orville E. Kelly (of Burlington, Iowa) for the purposes of allowing the U. S. Atomic Veteran Community to speak, with a single voice, to their inability to get a fair hearing related to their developing (radiogenic) health issues that may have been precipitated by their exposure to “ionizing” radiation while participating in a nuclear weapon test detonation, or a “post-test” event. From the beginning, and to date, we continue to pursue our purpose to this dedicated cause.

Atomic Veterans have often paid an unrecognized, ignored, and underappreciated price for their service and sacrifice to our nation. Radiation is invisible and its devastating health effects on the human body are not readily apparent. It takes its toll over the years (often decades) with deadly or debilitating cancers and many other secondary medical issues.

Sadly, many Atomic Veterans feel the government’s attitude toward them regarding their radiation exposure claims is, “deny, lie, and then hope you die”.

I know this from personal experience. I am currently a VA-rated 100% disabled veteran from my service-connected radiation exposure while working at the Nevada Test Site (NTS). The NTS is where the US tested nearly 1,000 atomic bombs from the 1950s to 1993. Most were underground, but what surprises most people are that there were over a hundred open air bursts before 1962. Over the decades, hundreds of thousands of veterans participated in the development and testing of these weapons.

I was assigned to the NTS as an Air Force Research and Development Engineering Officer back in the mid 80s for over three years, where it was deemed a safe place to work. The Federal Government finally designated the NTS and the adjacent Area 51 a Special Exposure Cohort (SEC) site back in 2010. The SEC class covers anyone working at the NTS for more than 250 days up until 1993 to include underground testing, and then came down with one of 22 types of cancers.

I was diagnosed with Colon Cancer in 2004, and then received chemotherapy, plus radiation treatment, and ultimately a radical surgical abdominoperineal resection (APR) procedure, resulting in a permanent colostomy. I have also recently been diagnosed with prostate cancer.

I am now battling secondary medical conditions related to the chemo/radiation therapy and multiple surgeries. I am also battling with the VA to get these secondary conditions rated. Plus, I am working

with my Congressman Warren Davidson to bring attention to flaws in the system and bring attention to issues concerning Atomic Vets, and hopefully simplify and streamline the system.

Enough about my woes, my point is that I have had many battles with the bureaucracy and have learned several lessons along the way that I am willing to share with other veterans.

As the Ohio NAAV Commander, I have heard several harrowing tales from Ohio members involving their participation and witness to atomic testing. For example, here is an account from a member from Barberton who is a 90 year old Navy Veteran. He was a gunners mate aboard a USN destroyer (USS Benner) participating in operation Hardtack at Enewetak Atoll. Operation Hardtack was a series of 35 nuclear tests conducted by the United States from April 28 to August 18 in 1958 at the Pacific Proving Grounds. At the time of testing, the Operation Hardtack test series included more nuclear detonations than all prior nuclear explosions in the Pacific Ocean put together. As a gunners mate, he was in a 5" deck gun turret and his job was to fire smoke rounds (rockets) over ground zero to provide a reference for shock wave propagation. After the blast, that was only two or three miles away from the ship, the destroyer would then turn away at full speed to outrace the resulting tidal wave. On one occasion the ship was porpoising up and down so badly the propellers (screws) were bobbing out of the water. Other participants on board can remember being able to see through their hands to see bones in their fingers as they covered their eyes from the flash.

Other Ohio NAAV members tell stories about radioactive water spray raining down on their ships and then having to hose themselves and their ships off to decontaminate. Or even worse, ride the ship all the way back to the Navy yard at San Francisco to decontaminate the ship there.

Several other members recount missions aboard weather or instrumentation aircraft flying around and through mushroom clouds.

I've heard other stories from Ohio NAAV veterans that watched the bombs go off from slit trenches in Nevada, or felt the ground undulate from under their feet during underground nuclear detonations.

Tens of thousands of other Atomic Veterans have their own stories and experiences. The point is, many of these Veterans are now in their mid to late 70s or older. They deserve to have their stories told, be remembered, be appreciated, and ultimately fairly compensated for their sacrifices. HB 414 will help accomplish this.

The SEC designation I mentioned earlier allows eligible claimants to be compensated without the completion of a NIOSH radiation dose reconstruction or determination of the probability of causation. To qualify for compensation as a member of an SEC class, a covered employee must have at least one of the 22 specified cancers and worked for a specified period of time at one of the SEC work sites. Amazingly, there are hundreds of sites listed in the US including the Pacific Test Area.

Of particular interest to those here in the Great Buckeye State, is that there are several SEC sites on this list as shown below:

- **Baker Brothers Site, 1943-1996 (AWE)** (Toledo, Ohio)
- **Battelle Laboratories – King Avenue, 1943-70 (AWE, BE, DOE)** Columbus, Ohio)

- **Feed Materials Production Center (FMPC), 1951-1983 (DOE)** (Fernald, Ohio) (a/k/a Fernald; Fernald Environmental Management Project (FEMP); FERMCO)
- **General Electric Co., 1961-1970 (DOE)** (Evendale, Ohio)
- **Harshaw Chemical Company, 1942-1949 (AWE)** (Cleveland, Ohio) (a/k/a HarshawFiltrol Partners; Uranium Refinery)
- **Horizons, Inc., 1952-1956 (AWE)**(Cleveland, Ohio) (a/k/a Celcon Metals Co.; Lamotite, Inc.)
- **Monsanto Chemical Company, 1943-1949 (AWE, DOE)** (Dayton, Ohio) (a/k/a Dayton Project; Old Schoolhouse; Runnymede Playhouse; Units I, III and IV)
- **Mound Plant, 1949-1980 (DOE)** (Miamisburg/Dayton, Ohio) (a/k/a Dayton Project; Miamisburg Closure Project; Miamisburg Environmental Management Project (MEMP); Monsanto Research Corp.; MOUND; Mound Site; Units I, III and IV)
- **Piqua Organic Moderated Reactor, 1966-1969 (DOE)** (Piqua, Ohio) (a/k/a Piqua Nuclear Power Facility)
- **Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant, before February 1, 1992 (DOE)** (Piketon, Ohio)

The bottom line is that Veterans deserve the same level of consideration and benefits as civilians and contractors currently afforded those under a SEC class designation.

The Ohio General Assembly should heartily and unanimously pass HB-414 to support and recognize Atomic Veterans.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this very important matter.

Regards,

David J. Crawford
Ohio Commander, National Association of Atomic veterans

Cc: Ohio Representative Stephan A. Huffman, (R-Tipp City), District 80