

On October 23, 2007, the Committee held a hearing on the health and environmental impacts of uranium contamination in the Navajo Nation in the aftermath of decades of uranium mining and milling. Representatives of the Navajo Nation described widespread contamination of the surface and groundwater around four former milling sites and 520 abandoned uranium mines and the health risks that this contamination presents. Five federal agencies—the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Department of Energy (DOE), the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), and the Indian Health Service (IHS)—testified on the limited steps taken to date to clean up the contamination. The hearing represented the first occasion on which the five responsible agencies had met to discuss solutions.

On June 16, 2008, the five agencies jointly submitted to the Committee a five-year plan to begin cleaning up the widespread uranium contamination in the Navajo Nation. Since that time, EPA assessed 70 houses and other structures near the abandoned mine sites for contamination and began demolishing contaminated structures.