

From January 1951 to July 1962, the United States Atomic Energy Commission conducted nearly 100 above-ground nuclear detonations at the Nevada Test Site. Nuclear fallout from these tests exposed nearby residents, known as "downwinders," to dangerous amounts of radiation. In 1990, Congress passed the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA) to compensate victims of U.S. nuclear testing, including downwinders.

RECA's eligibility criteria have long been the subject of controversy. Under the law, residents of 10 southwest counties in Utah are eligible to receive compensation, while residents of 19 other counties in Utah are ineligible. Hundreds of Utah residents with radiation-associated cancers have been denied compensation because they live outside RECA's boundaries.

At the request of Rep. Jim Matheson, the Special Investigations Division examined new information about cancer rates in Utah. This new information, which was compiled by the National Cancer Institute, includes data on the rates of radiation-associated cancers by county in Utah from 1973 to 2001. It shows that radiation-associated cancer is actually more common in counties where residents are excluded from compensation than in those counties where residents are included under the RECA law. **Documents and Links**

- [Report: Radiation-Associated Cancer in Utah](#)