



MEDIA ADVISORY



Wednesday, October 20, 2021

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ENDAUM v. United States Government Case Reaches Important Milestone with Inter-American Commission on Human Rights

ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO, USA—Eastern Navajo Diné Against Uranium Mining (ENDAUM) announced today it will file its Additional Observations on the Merits including written and video testimony and other exhibits to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) based in Washington, D.C., on Thursday, Oct. 21.

ENDAUM's petition states that when the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) licensed Hydro Resources, Inc. (HRI) (now known as NuFuels, a subsidiary of the Canadian mining company Laramide Resources) to operate uranium mining in the two Diné (Navajo) communities of Crownpoint and Churchrock it violated human rights guaranteed in the *American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man*, including the rights to life, health, benefits of culture, fair trial, and property.

The U.S. NRC licensed an ISL uranium mine it *knows* will contaminate groundwater that is an important resource of drinking water and cultural identity to communities that suffer increased risk of death and disease from historic uranium mining and milling the United States government not only tolerated but promoted.

ENDAUM and the New Mexico Environmental Law Center (NMELC) will be holding a **Gathering over zoom on THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21 AT 12:30PM MDT to Celebrate the filing and to be available to members of the media to answer any questions** about this unprecedented reckoning for the U.S. government and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) for past and future uranium mining and milling activities on Indigenous lands.

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What: ENDAUM v. US Govt. Filing Day Celebration & Media Event

When: Thursday, October 21, 2021 at 12:30pm to 1:15pm MDT (2:30pm-3:15pm EDT)

Who: ENDAUM members and NMELC Senior Staff Attorney Eric Jantz, plus supporters and allies

Why: To celebrate the filing of additional observations/evidence to the **Inter-American Commission on Human Rights**, that the US govt violated the human rights of Indigenous communities by licensing uranium mining in Crownpoint and Churchrock

Where: This event will be held online over **zoom** due to COVID restrictions. Please find the **Zoom link below**.

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The U.S. government **failed** to protect the human rights of Indigenous communities when NRC licensed HRI's *in situ* leach (ISL) mines. **The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights declared ENDAUM's petition "admissible" in March 2021** and provided until October 21, 2021 for additional observations to be submitted. Due to COVID restrictions, the filing will be submitted electronically. The Additional Observations on the Merits will be made public on Thursday, October 21 immediately after they are filed. To read the IACHR admissibility announcement, go to this link: <http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/decisions/2021/USAD654-11EN.pdf>

Rita Capitan, ENDAUM cofounder and Crownpoint Chapter President, said: "In this complicated world that we live in today, it will be less worrisome if we could keep our precious community **water** safe and pure for our generations to come. We owe them that. WATER IS LIFE."

Mitchell Capitan, ENDAUM cofounder, who worked in an ISL pilot project lab and witnessed firsthand the failure to successfully remediate groundwater after ISL mining activities, said: "Much of our lands has been exploited by mining companies for profit; they left it contaminated, doing minimal reclamation or none at all to this day. In Crownpoint and the Churchrock area, we have rights to protect our pristine water before further damage is done like years before. Water Is Life and **we will protect it for generations to come.**"

Jonathan Perry, ENDAUM Director and Becenti Chapter President, said, "Our filing today is crucial for the protection of our Diné communities, our people, our homeland, and our culture. We will stand for our human rights and not allow our value as Indigenous People to be diminished. The federal government must realize that we are not disposable and that water is life."

Larry King, member of ENDAUM who has lived under the threat of eviction from his land if HRI would start uranium mining in Churchrock, said, "ISL [*in situ* leach mining] destroys water, destroys life, destroys communities and the environment. The IACHR needs to rescind the NRC license issued to HRI."

Christine Smith, a member of ENDAUM, who is an elementary school teacher in Crownpoint who lives next to HRI's uranium processing facility, said, "As a Native American where uranium mining has occurred in the past, I hope to prevent this from ever happening again. In the past, The People were not consulted or invited to the table to be a part of any policy decision making affecting our community or educated to the harmful effects of uranium, so now we are in a position to protect our community, our water, and our future generations by filing this petition to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. Water will determine our survival as a people beginning now and into the future, especially with climate change, so we all collectively become protectors of what sustains us."

Eric Jantz, NMELC Senior Staff Attorney who has worked on this case for 20 years, said: "The U.S. talks a good game on human rights, but when called on to respect human rights at home, there are suddenly a bunch of excuses why international human rights laws shouldn't apply to our government. The U.S. simply has no credibility calling out human rights abuses abroad until it can stop its own abuses here."

Dr. Virginia Neocha, NMELC Executive Director, said, "The New Mexico Environmental Law Center is honored to represent ENDAUM on this important matter. It is our privilege and responsibility to work alongside the most impacted communities in defending their fundamental human rights to clean air, land, and water. We will continue to work with frontline communities in demanding that environmental justice is upheld. We are thankful to the IACHR for their decision to hear ENDAUM's petition."

Remedies requested in ENDAUM's petition include: that the NRC rescind or not renew HRI's uranium mining license; that the IACHR hold a hearing on the merits and a thematic hearing about broader impacts to Indigenous communities from uranium mining and milling; that the US government respect Navajo Nation law and prioritize Diné cultural views, practices, beliefs and expression in Dinétah; that the US government purchase or condemn the mineral rights to ensure those minerals are never developed; that a remediation plan be created and implemented; and that an environmental assessment be conducted of impacts from uranium mining and milling.

Zoom link for Live Event on Thursday, October 21st at 12:30pm MDT (2:30pm EDT) to celebrate ENDAUM v. United States Filing Day and to be available to Media for Qs:

NMELC NM Environmental Law Center is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85439942349>

Meeting ID: 854 3994 2349

One tap mobile

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Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85439942349>

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