

RESOLUTION NUMBER 2015 – 54
OF THE KILI/BIKINI/EJIT LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL

WHEREAS, on March 7, 1946, the U.S. Navy moved the 167 inhabitants of Bikini off their atoll to facilitate the U.S. nuclear testing program in the Marshall Islands; and

WHEREAS, the Navy first moved the Bikinians to Rongerik Atoll, 125 miles east of Bikini, leaving them with a few weeks' supply of food and water, where they nearly starved to death; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Navy, only after the appearance of newspaper disclosing the dire conditions on Rongerik, moved the Bikinians to Kwajalein Atoll in March 1948 and then moved them again six months later, this time to Kili Island, about 400 miles southeast of Bikini Atoll; and

WHEREAS, between June 1946 and July 1958, the United States exploded 23 atomic and hydrogen bombs at Bikini Atoll; and

WHEREAS, the nuclear tests caused severe, extensive, and long-lasting destruction to Bikini Atoll, including the March 1, 1954 "Bravo" hydrogen bomb shot – the largest manmade explosion in the history of the world – which created a fireball four miles wide, vaporized three islands and portions of others, left a one-mile, 200-foot deep hole in the atoll's reef, destroyed most of the buildings on an island 14 miles across the lagoon to the south, caused the concrete detonation bunker on Eneu Island, 24 miles away, to move off its foundation, and caused buildings at Kwajalein, 250 miles away, to shake as if there had been an earthquake; and

WHEREAS, the Bravo shot created what was called at the time an "unexpected" shift in the winds, sending fallout east instead of north, right over Bikini Island and downwind to Rongelap and Utrik; and

WHEREAS, the deadly fallout from the Bravo shot covered an area of 7,000 square miles, which means that if the bomb had been set off in Washington, DC and the fallout headed northeast, everyone from Washington to Boston would be dead; and

WHEREAS, President Dwight Eisenhower told a press conference in late March 1954 that U.S. scientists were "surprised and astonished" at the size of the Bravo shot; and

WHEREAS, President Lyndon Johnson announced in August 1968 that Bikini was safe and that the resettlement of Bikini would "not offer a significant threat to [the Bikinians'] health and safety;" and

WHEREAS President Johnson ordered the atoll rehabilitated and resettled, and the first Bikinians returned to their atoll in 1969; and

WHEREAS, limited radiological measurement in the early 1970's led U.S. scientists to urge the Bikinians to limit their intake of locally grown foods, such as coconuts, breadfruit, and pandanus; and

WHEREAS, concerned about their safety, the Bikinians brought suit in 1975 seeking to compel the U.S. Government to conduct a comprehensive radiological survey of Bikini Atoll. In their complaint, the Bikinians stated: "For us to make an intelligent decision to resettle Bikini Atoll, they must be able to weigh our desire to return against the radiological risks of returning. We have not been provided with that information"; and

WHEREAS, the Bikinians dismissed the lawsuit after the U.S. Government agreed to conduct a thorough radiological survey of Bikini Atoll; and

WHEREAS, a team of U.S. physicians examining the Bikinians in April 1978 described what they called an "incredible" one-year 75% increase in their body burdens of radioactive cesium-137, leading the physicians to conclude that the Bikinians had likely ingested the largest amounts of radiation of any known population, and they determined that the people had to be moved immediately; and

WHEREAS, in August 1978, the United States again evacuated the people from Bikini Atoll, sending some to Ejit Island in Majuro Atoll and others back to Kili Island; and

WHEREAS, numerous radiological surveys of Bikini conducted since late 1978 have concluded that the atoll was - and still is - not safe for human habitation; and

WHEREAS, an Atomic Energy Commission blue-ribbon panel, in estimating the radiation dose the people would receive, relied on an AEC scientist's erroneous data that threw off one part of their calculations by a factor of nearly 100. "We just plain goofed," the scientist told the press; and

WHEREAS, the more than 5,300 Bikinians living today remain scattered throughout the Marshall Islands and the United States, with the largest number still living on Kili and a large number on Ejit Island in Majuro Atoll; and

WHEREAS, Kili remains home to most Bikinians more than 69 years after the testing began, and life there remains difficult. Kili is a single island, not an atoll with a lagoon. Bikini, with its 23 islands and 243-square mile lagoon, is thousands of times bigger, and its land area is more than nine times bigger. Kili has no sheltered fishing grounds, so the skills the people had developed for lagoon and ocean life were rendered useless on Kili; and

WHEREAS, this drastic change from an atoll existence, with its abundant fish and islands as far as the eye could see, to an isolated island with no lagoon and inaccessible marine resources, continues to take a severe psychological toll on the people; and

WHEREAS, Kili Island has been covered by high waves at least every year since 2011 and twice in 2015 (January and February); and

WHEREAS, when Kili is inundated by the sea or when there is heavy rains the plane cannot land on the runway, and if the sea is rough the ships cannot take people off the island or offload food making it very difficult when there is an emergency or a life threatening situation; and

WHEREAS, this flooding resulted in the contamination of all wells on Kili Island, leaving them brackish, the destruction of most vegetation, and the crushing of the seawall that was built in the 1980s; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has found that, most likely because of climate change, "global average sea level rose throughout the 20th century, and the rate of change has accelerated in recent years"; and

WHEREAS, it is therefore likely that Kili Island will continue to be periodically covered by high waves; and

WHEREAS, Kili Island today is unsuitable for anything but a small number of people and is becoming more and more uninhabitable; and

WHEREAS, conditions on Kili Island are similar to those facing the people of Bikini on Rongerik in 1946 – of being placed on an island that cannot sustain the population; and

WHEREAS, approximately 800 Bikinians live on Kili Island today; and

WHEREAS, it has become clear that Kili Island can no longer sustain a population of more than a few hundred people; and

WHEREAS, the Resettlement Trust Fund for the People of Bikini (Resettlement Trust Fund) was established by the U.S. Congress in 1982 under P.L. 97-257 "for the relocation and resettlement of the Bikini people in the Marshall Islands, principally on Kili and Ejit Islands"; and

WHEREAS, the Resettlement Trust Fund was never designed to finance a relocation of the entire Bikini population from Kili Island; and

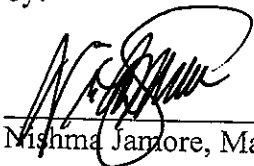
WHEREAS, the U.S. Government remains morally, if not legally, responsible for the welfare of the Bikini people due to its failure ever to conduct a radiological cleanup of Bikini Atoll to repair the damage it caused from the nuclear testing program there; and

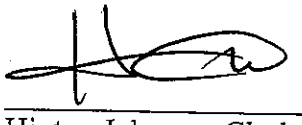
WHEREAS, the U.S. Government did discharge part of its moral and legal responsibility to the people of Enewetak, the site of an additional 43 U.S. atomic and hydrogen bomb tests in the 1950s, when it conducted a partial radiological cleanup of that atoll;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved, that:

1. The Council calls on the U.S. Congress to appropriate the funds necessary either to (a) conduct a radiological cleanup and resettlement of Bikini Atoll so that the people can return to their homeland after nearly 70 years of exile; and/or (b) relocate and resettle the Bikini people in another acceptable location either within or outside of the Republic of the Marshall Islands.
2. The Council respectfully requests the U.S. Department of the Interior Office of Insular Affairs to assist them in requesting this legislation from the U.S. Congress.

APPROVED by the Kili/Bikini/Ejit Local Government Council this 3rd day of August 2015
by:

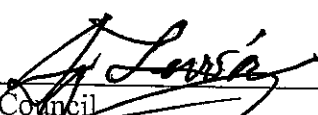

Mishma Jamore, Mayor

8/3/2015 
Hinton Johnson, Clerk

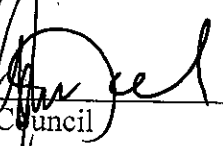
Senator Tomaki Juda

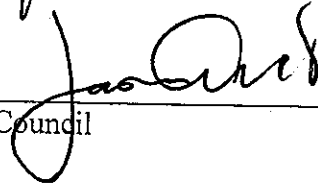

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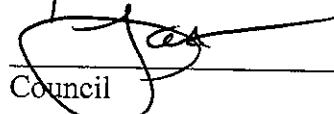

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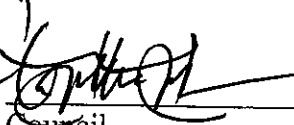

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