

RESOLUTION NUMBER 2015 - 46  
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. It first moved them to Rongerik Atoll, 125 miles east of Bikini, leaving them with a few weeks' supply of food and water; and

WHEREAS, the Bikinians nearly starved to death on Rongerik, the U.S. Navy, following newspaper disclosure of the dire conditions there, 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 nuclear weapon ever detonated by the United States - 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, and moved concrete buildings 24 miles across the lagoon; 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." He 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 and Ejit Islands have been covered by high waves at least 5 times in the last 4 years, resulting in the contamination of all wells on both islands and leaving them brackish; and

WHEREAS, because of ongoing deterioration of conditions on Kili and Ejit Islands, many of the people of Bikini living on these islands want to move out of the Marshall Islands, primarily to the United States; and

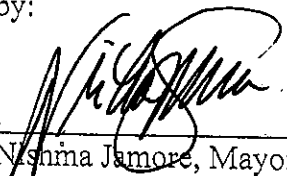
WHEREAS, the Resettlement Trust Fund for the People of Bikini was established by the U.S. Congress in 1982 under P.L. 97-257 "for the relocation and resettlement of the Bikini people in the Marshall Islands, principally on Kili and Ejit Islands"; and

WHEREAS, despite Section 103(c)(1) of the Compact of Free Association Act, 48 U.S. Code § 1921b(1), which states that the Government of the Marshall Islands shall assure that Ejit Island will continue to be available to the people of Bikini without charge for their use, "until such time as Bikini is restored and inhabitable and the continued use of Ejit is no longer necessary . . . ." the Marshall Islands Nitijela has repeatedly entertained bills stating that the Majuro Atoll Local Government shall exercise the jurisdictional powers and rights over Ejit Island.


NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved, that:

1. The Council asks the U.S. Congress to pass legislation stating that the Resettlement Trust Fund for the People of Bikini, established October 16, 1982 pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 97-257, may be used for the relocation and resettlement of the people of Bikini 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 3<sup>rd</sup> day of August, 2015  
by:

  
Nishina Jamore, Mayor

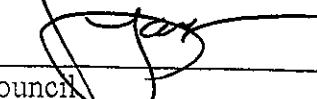
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Hinton Johnson, Clerk

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Senator Tomaki Juda

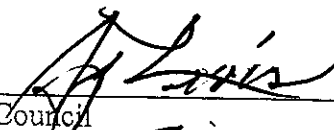
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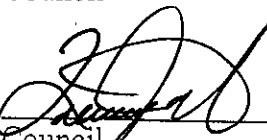
  
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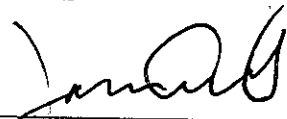
  
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