



Historic NRC Approval Paves Way for Innovative Uranium Mine Cleanup on Navajo Nation Lands



To commemorate the milestone, NRC Chairman David A. Wright, Commissioners Matthew J. Marzano and Bradley R. Crowell, U.S. Senator Cynthia Lummis (R-WY), Deputy Director of the Navajo Nation Washington Office DeWayne Crank, and DISA leaders Greyson Buckingham, Stephen J. Cohen, and Jeff Merrifield gathered in Washington, D.C.

On October 8, 2025, the Navajo Nation Washington Office (NNWO) participated in an event hosted by U.S. Senator Cynthia Lummis (R-WY). The short event commemorated the decision by the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to grant the first-ever Service Provider License to DISA Technologies, Inc. This license authorizes the company to remediate abandoned uranium mine waste across the western United States. The license represents a turning point in America's approach to uranium contamination, particularly for the Navajo Nation, where hundreds of abandoned mines continue to threaten public health and the environment.

This approval marks the culmination of nearly two years of federal review and collaboration among the NRC, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the Navajo Nation. DISA's licensing process began after a 2023 EPA-funded treatability study, conducted in partnership with the Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency, demonstrated the safety and scalability of DISA's High-Pressure Slurry Ablation (HPSA) technology. The process involved rigorous safety testing, environmental assessments, and interagency consultation, leading to final approval by NRC Commissioners David Wright, Matthew Marzano, and Bradley Crowell in October 2025.

For the Navajo Nation, this milestone holds deep significance. From 1944 to 1986, an estimated 30 million tons of uranium ore were extracted on or near Navajo lands to fuel the U.S. nuclear weapons program. When the mines were abandoned in the 1980s, the waste, laden with radioactive materials and heavy metals, was left behind. Today, more than 1,200 contaminated sites remain in the Nation, polluting groundwater, soil, and air. Generations of Diné families have lived with the health consequences, including elevated rates of kidney disease, cancers, and other illnesses linked to uranium exposure.

DISA's new NRC license offers a path toward meaningful remediation. Its patented HPSA process mechanically separates and cleans contaminated materials without the use of chemicals, allowing uranium to be safely recovered for cleanup and possibly for recycling into the domestic nuclear fuel supply if Navajo leadership decides to do so. The process dramatically reduces the amount of waste requiring long-term disposal and can be deployed directly at mine sites, minimizing transportation risks.

This partnership demonstrates how modern technology, tribal leadership, and federal oversight can work together to transform a legacy of contamination into opportunities for environmental justice, economic revitalization, and national energy security. For the Navajo people, the NRC's decision signifies not only a regulatory milestone but a long-awaited step toward healing lands and communities burdened by America's uranium past.