we might develop a breakthrough idea.

During that period of time, relatively safely for 100 years, the scientists say it is. Eminent scientists say it is safe. It is estimated that some 60 million people live within a mile of the routes that may be proposed for transporting nuclear power in this country that we recognize first there has to be something done with the dangerous waste associated with nuclear power. It is important that we stop the game and sent everybody home.

The reason I mention this is there has been a mad clamor about the nuclear power industry and shipping nuclear waste. The nuclear industry doesn't care where it goes, although they are focused on Nevada for the present time. I think everyone needs to recognize that transporting hazardous materials is very difficult. If people think hydrochloric acid is bad—which it is—think about how bad nuclear waste might have done—where they did not have enough air conditioning and not enough clean air. They may have very well have a lower level of radiation when they were mining in uranium mines that weren't aerated—where they did not have enough air conditioning and not enough clean air. They may have very well died during their lives breathed in radiations and contracted serious illnesses. Some might have died. Some may today be suffering from cancer or other diseases.

In any event, this law was passed. It was kind of heralded as a very good commitment by the Government and very simple. You didn't have to get a lawyer for these claims. It was limited to $100,000 in exchange for making it simple and setting some standards: You could come in and prove your case. You could probably prove your claim in a relatively short period of time.

So and believe it or the money up, you would get your check. You could get it as a widow. You could get it as one who was sick. You could get it as anyone entitled to it under the statute. It worked pretty well for a while.

Then something very ghastly happened for the beneficiaries. Pretty soon, they started going to the Justice Department and asking them for money.

The Justice Department told this growing group of Americans: We don't have any money. They said: What do you mean? Here is your assurance that the Government says it owes you $100,000. They said: What do you mean? Here is your assurance that the Government says it owes you $100,000.

They said: Well, Congress didn't put up the money. We ran out. So you will not be worried, why don't we give you an IOU. Here is your assurance that the Government says it owes you $100,000. These people started coming to see their Senators—not only me but Senator BINGAMAN and other Senators—saying, time is passing. I am getting sicker. I may even die, and I have an IOU from this great big American Government. Why can't they pay me?

Let me say in this Chamber that it is embarrassing to say it even here, but it is more embarrassing to say it to the victims. There is a big series of discussions going on between committees—even appropriations subcommittees—trying to whitch one ought to appropriate the money.

In the meantime, no money is appropriated. People walk around with the IOUs filing their claims, and they are working on them day by day. And another law passes. It is for a larger group of Americans who come in to adjusting their claims for exposure to low-level radiation. It is for radiation where we had uranium in a Richmond, VA, mine or perhaps in Paducah, KY, and various places in Ohio. For this larger group of people, those claims are still being worked.

We say: Well, time has passed, and maybe these claims should be a little higher. So they are awarded $150,000 if they can prove the claim that they are either totally disabled or are an heir.

Congress in that case—coming out of a different committee—made that program an entitlement. Even the occupant of the Chair, who is a new Senator, would understand that those claims are paid without anybody approving it—just putting it on the security check or your veterans check.

Here is one group of Americans filing their claims. Some of them are already adjudicated; we stamp out a check, while over here another group of Americans carry around IOUs they have to cease the embarrassment and do something half fair was to put language in the supplemental appropriations bill that would see to it that for any claims already finished where people are carrying around the IOUs, or any that are completed for the rest of this year, there is money for them. We provided that in the Senate bill on supplemental appropriations.

Frankly, we even had to find a way to end it for the beneficiaries. The appropriations bill that is going to put in money for you to be as concerned as I or those finishing up their claims by the end of this fiscal year, they will have the money in the Justice Department to pay it. I say to the Senate, I know it is difficult, unless you have this problem, for those holding those IOUs and for those finishing up their claims at the end of this fiscal year, they will have the money in the Justice Department to pay it. I say to the Senate, I know it is difficult, unless you have this problem, for those holding those IOUs and for those finishing up their claims at the end of this fiscal year, they will have the money in the Justice Department to pay it.

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program called a mandatory or an entitlement. But we have not been able to get that done yet.

So I have said it for a second reason. I hope the committees that are considering it—and I will do my best to go see the committees to make myself understood, and take with me whatever evidence I need to convince the chairmen and ranking members they ought to make this an entitlement. But in the meantime, the people who have claims right up until the end of this year will get paid. It will take a couple weeks, so they should not be coming into our offices saying thank you yet, nor should they come in and ask where is the money. They just have to wait a little while. It takes a little bit of time.

I thought, since we see them and we hear them, that maybe I should let the Senate vicariously hear them—you can’t hear them, but you can hear them through me.

What we have to do is not let another year pass because this is a problem, whether or not you come from a State that has “down-winders” and/or uranium miners; this carries with it some very serious kinds of overtones for the U.S. Government. You create a program. You tell people: We have been sorry for you up until now, but we will give you a little claim here—$100,000—and then, when you prove it up, you will take it, and you no longer have any claims, and we have said that we have paid you. It is just not right that you do not do it, just not right.

It is growing. The newspapers are starting to carry it. I guess they are starting to carry: “Congress finally puts up the money today.” That is good. But I hope there is a lingering interest in how we fix it. It should not be that 6 months into next year somebody exposed to low-level radiation at one of America’s uranium enrichment plants proves their claim and gets an automatic check, but yet you have these people who might have worked 35 years ago, for 20 years, in a nonaerated uranium mine, where the U.S. Government, even through its heralded Atomic Energy Commission, which I know a lot about, made a mistake with reference to the quality of air in the mines—where acknowledgements were made many years later; and it is hard to get the acknowledgement, but we finally got it—yet a mistake was made.

So I thought it would be good while we had nothing to do in this Senate Chamber, that maybe we could spread this story of what has happened and say thank you to the Appropriations Committee for the emergency measure today. And we look forward to one of our committees passing a bill that will make these few remaining people who are entitled to it know they will get their money when their claim is adjudicated.

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