



KILI/BIKINI/EJIT
LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL

Tomaki Juda
Mayor

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The Honorable Bill Clinton, President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Clinton,

I am writing to you for the first time, Mr. President, to ask for your help. Before I put forth my request, however, I feel it necessary to explain a little about the history of the Bikinian people.

The people of Bikini have a long relationship with your country, the United States of America. We were removed from our islands by the U.S. government in 1946 so that your military could test a total of 23 nuclear weapons over the course of 12 years. The first deliverable hydrogen bomb, 1,000 times greater than the Hiroshima and the Nagasaki blasts, was detonated on Bikini Atoll in 1954: this bomb heavily contaminated our atoll--and most of the northern Marshall Islands--with radioactivity.

For the past fifty years our people have been living in exile on Kili Island, 425 miles to the south of Bikini. Our lagoon-based fishing, sailing and food gathering culture has seriously devolved. Kili Island has no lagoon. It is a very small, lone island with a rocky coral shoreline which is beaten by constant, turbulent seas: There is not even a dock to tie-up our fishing boats. In the early years of our exodus, our men, women and children suffered from various forms of deprivation--including repeated bouts of starvation--while on Kili.

In 1968, on the advice of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, President Lyndon B. Johnson announced that Bikini was safe for human habitation. After some of our people moved back, ten years later, in 1978, it was discovered that they had borne the highest body-burdens of radioactive cesium-137 ever ingested by a population of human beings. This was because the scientists did not realize that the cesium was being taken up through the root systems of the food crops.

Over the years since 1978, our people have been helped tremendously by the United States of America. We now have three trust funds totaling over \$150 million

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and, since 1988, we have been moving toward the restoration and resettlement of our atoll.

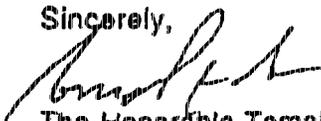
Since the debacle of the aborted move to Bikini in the 1970's, this resettlement effort, of course, has included the review of a number of scientific studies concerning the radiological condition on Bikini Atoll. Beginning in the late 1970's through to the present day, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory has studied the radiological conditions of Bikini, usually with two missions per year. In the early 1980's, the Bikini Atoll Rehabilitation Committee (BARC), a group of highly regarded American scientists, completed and submitted a report about the radiation on Bikini to the U.S. Congress. In the 1990's, we hired our own independent scientist, Herwig Paretzke, a German citizen, to review the findings of the aforementioned studies. There was also a Nationwide Radiological Study conducted by Dr. Steven Simon and an advisory group of scientists from around the world for the Marshall Islands government. In addition, the National Academy of Science also released a report about Rongelap Atoll in which Bikini Atoll was also discussed. All of this information was submitted to a panel of internationally renowned scientists, convened by the International Atomic Energy Agency, for review in December of 1995.

The IAEA is recommending the same method of radiological cleanup as the other scientists: Scrape the living area of Bikini, while at the same time spreading potassium fertilizer over the rest of the island to block the uptake of cesium by the food crops. While we find these results encouraging and are giving them serious consideration, I would like to request that you permit a small delegation from our local government to meet with you in person at the White House to discuss the issues surrounding our return.

You see, it is very important to us that the United States--and you, as the President--endorse what the scientists are now telling us about Bikini. If we can get your endorsement of the studies that have taken place on Bikini, and the methods that the scientists have recommended for the radiological cleanup of our atoll, it is my belief that we can progress with confidence toward the long awaited resettlement of our homeland.

We graciously thank you for considering this very important though humble request from our people who have given so much to the peace and security of the United States of America.

Sincerely,



The Honorable Tomaki Juda
Mayor for the Kili/Bikini/Ejit Local Government Council