

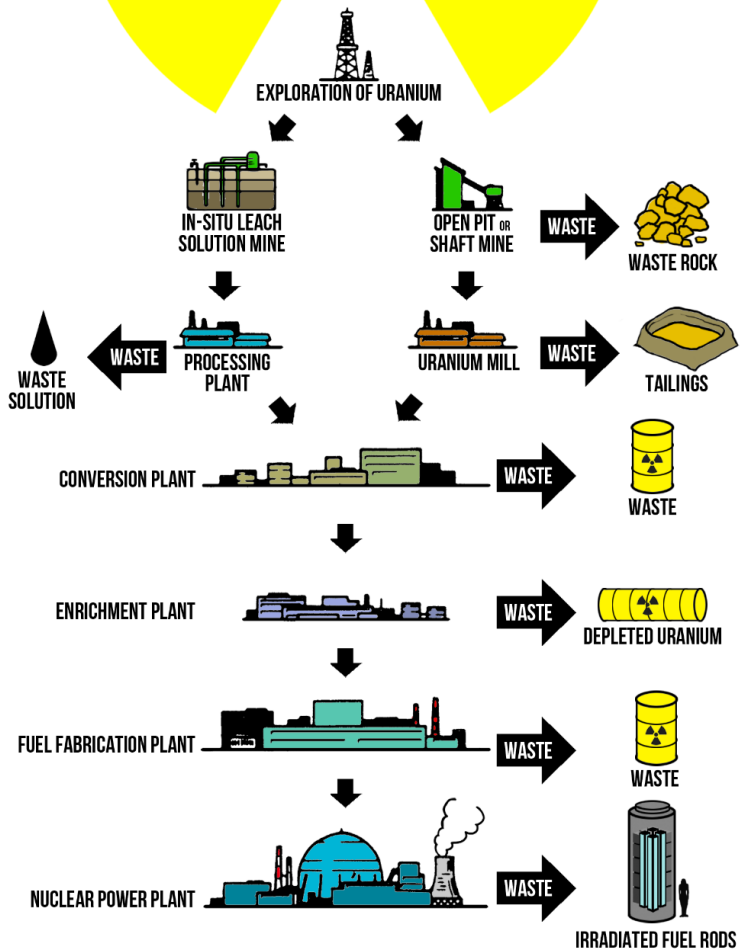
URANIUM FUEL CHAIN AND WASTE

Radioactive waste is generated at every stage of nuclear production, whether for nuclear energy or weapons.

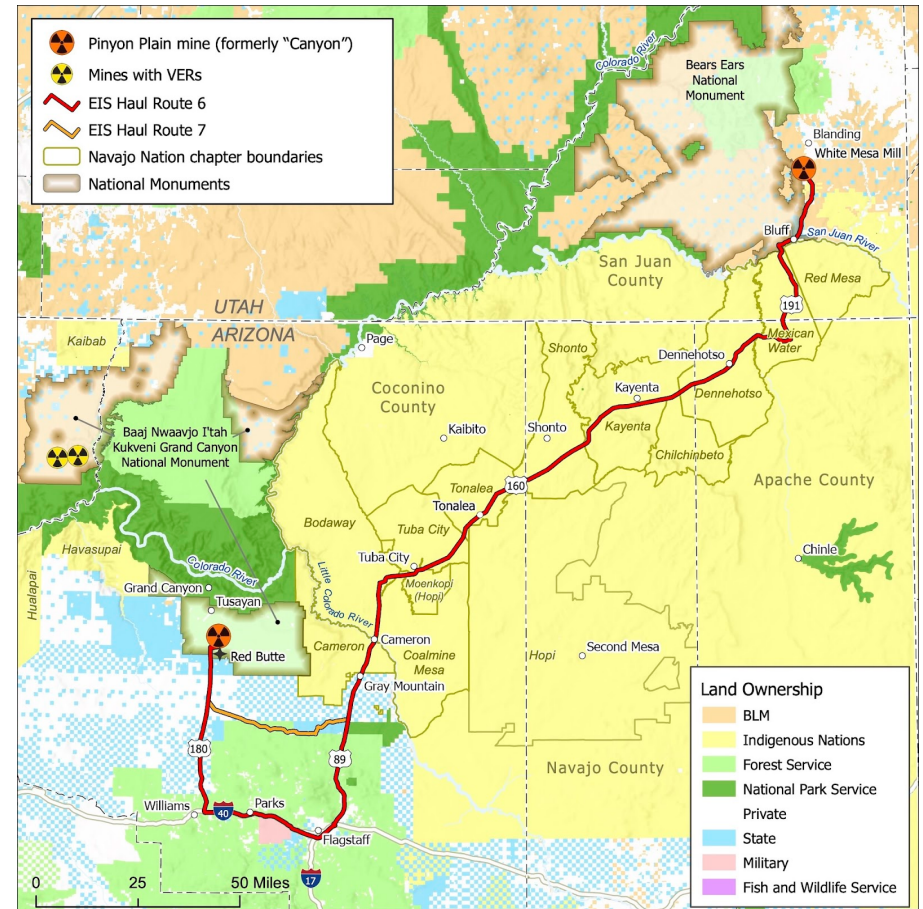
How long will these wastes stay toxic?

Thousands, some even millions of years. There is no long-term solution to manage the waste to keep it safely away from us for eternity.

Uranium mining has had a tremendous impact on Indigenous Peoples and vulnerable communities around the world. As uranium legacy issues continue to plague our communities, new uranium mining, milling and nuclear projects threaten communities and Sacred Sites.



HAUL NO! INFOSHEET: FACTS ABOUT URANIUM MINING, MILLING, AND RADIATION ON DINÉ BIKÉYAH



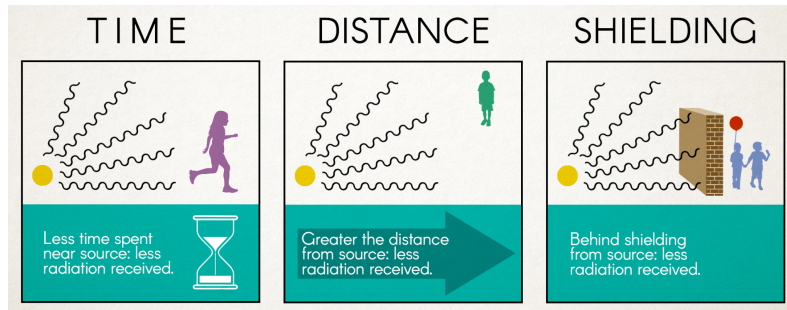
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FACTS ABOUT URANIUM MINING

1. Every step of the uranium fuel chain, from mining to nuclear energy and nuclear weapons, creates radioactive wastes that harms our environment and can harm us. Uranium production also releases other contaminants, such as radon and arsenic, which can pollute our air, food, and water sources. There are several ways that uranium released in the environment can get into our bodies or expose us to radiation. A universal standard for protection from radiation, specifically regarding [ionizing radiation](#), is to remember: time, distance, and shielding.



In some places, reducing time and distance is not an option. It's best to avoid known contaminated places or sources of radiation. Masks will help to reduce risk of inhalation of some particles and are accessible. This is the time to become educated about your surroundings and existing sources of exposure. There are many ways people can protect themselves from everyday risks of exposures from various sources of ionizing radiation. Radiation bioaccumulates in our bodies, it all adds up; and “has a [“disproportionate impact on women and girls.”](#) If we are aware, we can limit risks to radiation and keep our bioaccumulation low. We can help our bodies to deal with the impacts from uranium *both* as a radiative element and as a heavy metal by keeping ourselves healthy (diet and exercise) and limiting exposures as much as possible from: inhalation, ingestion or drinking of uranium pollution.

2. The [Pinyon Plain Mine](#) [formerly Canyon Mine] is located approximately 6 miles from the Grand Canyon and the Colorado River, on sacred lands of the Havasupai and other Indigenous nations. It is operated by Energy Fuels (EF), a Canadian company. The mine site is about 17 acres in size.

In January 2024, EF started stockpiling uranium ore. In July 2024, they began [transporting trucks of uranium ore](#) across Navajo Nation lands to its White Mesa Mill in southeastern Utah for processing. Pinyon Plain Mine's permit relies on a nearly 40 year old, [Environmental Impact Statement \[EIS\]](#), which DOES NOT represent current science and new research. The [Attorney General](#) of Arizona and [Arizona Governor](#) have each petitioned the US Forest Service [USFS] to review [new studies](#) that suggest devastating consequences of extractive practices on interconnected underground aquifers and drinking water near the Grand Canyon, with aquifers acting as fluid 'superhighways' allowing heavy metals and mining byproducts to enter groundwater reservoirs. Additionally, a 2024 US [Environmental Protection Agency study](#) also recommends further investigation and monitoring.

3. The Navajo Nation has a [law against uranium mining](#) and a [law against transport of radioactive materials](#), but the Pinyon Plain Mine is not on Navajo Nation lands and the Nation does not have

jurisdiction over the transport route. On July 30, 2024, transport of uranium from Pinyon Plain Mine started and was paused by an intervention by the Navajo Nation and the Governor of Arizona and [negotiations between Navajo Nation and Energy Fuels](#) regarding transport. In August 2024 the Navajo Nation passed [legislation to change its transportation law](#) from prohibiting transport to regulating transport.

4. Energy Fuels owns and operates the [White Mesa Mill](#) in southeastern Utah near a Ute Mountain Ute community, Bears Ears National Monument and the Four Corners region. It is the ONLY licensed and operating conventional uranium processing facility in the country. Over the last 10 years, uranium milling has been minimal but with new interests, EF plans to increase processing in 2025-6. [Source: [The Business of Radioactive Waste](#)].

5. White Mesa Mill neighbors the Ute Mountain Ute nation's [White Mesa community](#). EF quietly changed their business plan, and the mill became a commercial dumping ground for low-level radioactive wastes from contaminated sites [across America and the world](#). It is cheaper for polluters to send their waste to the mill than to licensed radioactive waste dumps. Energy Fuels plans to continue and increase production of these [“alternate feeds,”](#) specifically rare-earth elements (REE).

6. In late January 2025, the [Navajo Nation and Energy Fuels entered an agreement](#) for transport of uranium ore from Pinyon Plain Mine to the White Mesa Mill. This includes regulations and limitations for transport, but also allows more transport of uranium from abandoned uranium mines left across the Navajo Nation and the transport from Energy Fuels' [Roca Honda Project](#), a uranium mine near Tsoodzil (Mt. Taylor), a sacred mountain. [Transport of uranium](#) resumed February 12, 2025.

7. There are over [500 abandoned uranium mines](#) on Diné [Navajo] lands from 1940 to the present. Efforts to clean up the mines are ongoing and show negligence on the part of these companies who mine, reap profit, then file bankruptcy and leave a legacy of illness and death.

8. The Pinyon Plain Mine has used millions of gallons of water and has had issues with storing and transporting contaminated water in the past. Their drilling has punctured an aquifer, causing flooding multiple times at the mine and creating a greater risk of regional contamination [according to EF reports on the [Arizona Department of Environmental Quality](#) sites and [new study](#)].

9. The [Radiation Exposure Compensation Act](#) or “RECA” was one small step toward justice for eligible uranium and nuclear workers. However, with decades of work to expand and extend RECA, it expired in 2024. Advocates continue to work to continue and extend RECA, with inclusion of “Post-71” uranium workers, Trinity Test Downwinders and others not initially included.

10. With the United States and more than 30 other countries working toward [increasing nuclear](#) energy development as a [false solution](#) to climate change, you can play a role in protecting our land, water, and life for our future generations! Work to shutdown uranium mining and nuclear projects have been successful multiple times over the past decades in the US and globally. Your voice and your efforts are necessary to stop uranium mining and transport!

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