I come before this Board as the elected representative of thousands of Utahns who have been living with the terrible consequences of their government's deception regarding the effects of open-air atomic tests.

As the son of a downwinder, I share their skepticism of government communication on this issue.

After 50 years of revealing news accounts, backed up by the government's own officials, documents and the personal experience of Utahns –both living and dead—we know with certainty: our government told us we were safe. Our government knew we were at risk.

When I first came to Congress three years ago, RECA-eligible citizens—many gravely ill—received not compensation—but an IOU from the federal government.

Now, even though more funding has been made available to satisfy those claims, I remain concerned that many people who were exposed to radiation from government-sponsored nuclear testing are ineligible for help.

Radioactive fallout does not respect the lines on a map. The National Cancer Institute released its model of fallout in October 1997. It showed that doses of Iodine-131—an isotope associated with radioactive fallout exposure— were measured in almost every state in this country.

However, since Iodine–131 is the only barometer available to us at this point—closer examination of that National Cancer Institute study is critical.

Here in Utah, for example, the maps indicate that Utah County and Millard County have the same Iodine-131 exposure levels from the atmospheric testing conducted in the years between 1945 and 1962. Yet only residents of Millard County are currently eligible under RECA.

Also, 14 non-eligible counties have the same exposure levels as the two eligible counties of Sevier and Piute.

In February, the National Academies of Science called for an end to studies of the cancer risk associated with fallout.   In my opinion—and in the opinion of scientific experts involved in long-running cancer studies—that would be a mistake. The Academy should not curtail scientific examination when so much evidence exists as to the extent of fallout exposure.

Though I commend the Academy for holding this hearing today, additional hearings should—*at the very least*—be held in other locations with high fallout levels, such as Salt Lake City, eastern Colorado, Idaho, and New Mexico.

Finally, though RECA addresses the issue of above-ground testing, I believe it is appropriate for the Academy and the health community to look at the potential adverse effects of underground weapons testing as well.

Underground testing is promoted as "safer"—if we can even call it that—than above-ground testing. But there is substantial evidence that supports my belief that underground testing is not without risks.

At the infamous Banebury test in 1970, for instance, the leakage was documented in compelling pictures. Fallout exploded 8,000 feet into the air and went on for hours, even though that test was buried 900 feet underground.

It is disturbing that our government acknowledges only 11,000 deaths nationwide from radiation-related cancers, when independent research indicates that number could be anywhere from 100,000 to 800,000 deaths from radiation-caused cancers.

As "downwinders" Utahns have watched loved ones get sick and die simply because they trusted the government and were in the wrong place at the wrong time. They have lived with the uncertainty that a hidden "time bomb" –in the form of radiation damage to cells and genes—could go off at any time inside them.

We owe them more scientific answers, not less.

I remain concerned—as we contemplate the resumption of nuclear weapons-testing in the West—that we need to expand research into atomic fallout. It is my hope that the Academy will endorse an effort to further study why so many Americans were potentially victims of the nuclear arsenal that was supposed to protect them.