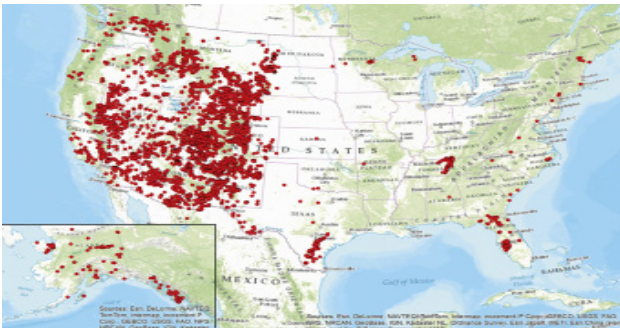




Abandoned uranium mines. Photo: U.S. DOE

Uranium mining, milling, ablation

New uranium mining started in the Southwest in late 2023, with uranium ore stockpiling near the Grand Canyon, beginning in January 2024, at Energy Fuels’ Pinyon Plain uranium mine. Uranium transport between the Grand Canyon and the Four Corners areas, from the mine to the mill, started in July 2024 and was temporarily paused for six months.

“Haul No!” is a Diné-led campaign focused on stopping transport of uranium through Diné traditional homelands. Due to impacts still endured by Diné residents from the Manhattan Project, the Navajo Nation has a law prohibiting new uranium mining on the reservation. The Navajo Nation also *had* a law prohibiting uranium transport, which was recently amended from banning transport to regulating transport.

Haul No! used community organizing and social media to boost awareness and inspire resistance to new mining and transport. The campaign was successful in getting the Navajo Nation government involved, which garnered support from Governor Hobbs of Arizona to pause the transport. Unexpectedly, the Navajo Nation ended up going into business with Energy Fuels, allowing transport from *both* the Pinyon Plain mine and another proposed uranium mine in New Mexico. The Roca Honda mine is at the base of sacred Tsoodzil, also known as Mt. Taylor. Under the guise of “cleanup,” the tribe is also allowing additional transport from AUMs to Energy Fuel’s White Mesa Mill in southeast Utah, exacerbating impacts to the Ute Mountain Ute nation.

The Navajo Nation has at least 523 AUMs and several uranium mills scattered throughout and around Diné Bikeyah (traditional homelands), none of which are properly cleaned up, creating health risks for local communities. In a misguided attempt to remediate these AUMs, the Navajo Nation is looking to Disa Technologies, a company proposing “ablation,” which uses water to separate more radioactive wastes [using high-pressure water to separate usable uranium from mine waste] for removal to White Mesa Mill, leaving other non-usable contamination on Navajo. However, ablation, as a means of uranium production, violates Navajo Nation law. In addition to AUMs, four former uranium mills located on Navajo are ongoing sources of surface and groundwater contamination, also not adequately addressed by the federal government.

Like the proposed copper mine threatening sacred Apache Oakflat in Arizona, hard rock mines established under the 1872 mining law exist by design to steal Indigenous homelands. With this old law and new push for domestic energy independence, Indigenous nations are working around the clock to protect their communities and sacred places from various extractive industry and energy projects: from lithium, hydrogen and rare earth elements production to pumped storage hydropower, renewed coal mining and beyond.

Uranium mining is just one part of a larger fight against resource exploitation, racism, genocide, capitalism, imperialism, and greenwashing, all under the umbrella of nuclear colonialism.

This year, several new mining and milling proposals are on the table in the Intermountain West region, using both conventional and in situ leach methods. The Velvet-Wood uranium and vanadium mine in Utah was green lit by the Trump administration in only fourteen days! With the price of uranium exceeding \$100/pound (USD) last year, and the onslaught of Trump’s push for critical minerals and national security, this uranium bubble has just begun. In order to fight nuclear colonialism, the front-end of *both* nuclear energy and weapons needs to be stopped.

— **Leona Morgan (she/her), co-founder of Haul No!, is a Diné activist and community organizer fighting nuclear colonialism, based in Albuquerque, New Mexico.**

Summer 2025

Fukushima Radioactive Waste Problems Metastasize

The Tokyo Electric Power Company, Tepco, reported on March 21 that two specially designed and newly installed robots will need three years to remove about 3,000 sandbags from the basements of the three destroyed reactor buildings at Fukushima-Daiichi, in Japan.

The sandbags were used in the panic-driven initial days of the triple reactor meltdowns of March 2011, when highly radioactive water gushed into the reactor basements and had to be diverted. *Interesting Engineering* reports that the sandbags are in areas “with lethal radiation levels” too hazardous for manual work.

The robots will be operated remotely due to the sandbags’ fierce radioactivity, because of the large bulk of the bags which weigh a total of 41 tons, and because of the chaotic wreckage in the destroyed reactors’ basements, the project is expected to take at least until March 2028, according to Tepco.

News reports did not specify the sort of radioactive materials that contaminate the deadly sandbags, but the melted reactor No. 3 was using fuel made partially of plutonium, the most toxic material known to science, which is radioactively hazardous for 240,000 years. Deadly isotopes beyond plutonium that make the high radiation zones too hot for humans include strontium-90, cesium-137 and -134,

Radical left vermin thugs

— *continued from page 8*

dor’s gulag-for-hire. Repeatedly belaboring his repetitive repetition again and again, Trump said on January 27 in Miami, “If they’ve been arrested many, many times, they’re repeat offenders by many numbers,” adding, “We’re going to get approval, hopefully, to get them the hell out of our country, along with others,” NBC News reported. The next day, Trump said in the Oval Office he wanted U.S. citizens convicted of crimes sent to foreign prisons “to get these animals out” of the United States. “If we could get them out of our country, we have other countries that would take them.” In February, El Salvador offered to jail U.S. citizens imprisoned for violent crimes in the “most severe cases,” in addition to the 260 men flown there April 6 from the United States without due process.

On May 9, White House adviser Stephen Miller said for the cameras, “The Constitution is clear — and that, of course, is the supreme law of the land — that the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus can be suspended in a time of invasion. So, it’s an option we’re actively looking at.” Miller selectively quotes the U.S. Constitution to suit his Apartheid agenda. Article VI says in full, “This Constitution, and the laws of the United States which shall be made in pursuance thereof, and all treaties made, or which shall be made, under the authority of the United States, shall be the supreme law of the land, and the judges in every state shall be bound thereby.”

Habeas corpus is the right to challenge your detention in court and threats of its suspension moved Sen. Chris Murphy of Connecticut to warn, “The slope to despotism can be slippery and quick.” Is Murphy on the list? This is where Trump’s deliberately irrational, secret, and rogue police actions, designed to keep opponents off balance, can look and feel like terror. In my work against nuclear weapons and the war system over four decades, I’ve been convicted of dozens of nonviolent misdemeanor charges, and one felony, for sit-ins, blockades, and non-payment of fines, and have been sent to 20 county jails and four federal prison camps — including one in Germany. Within our bands of “repeat offenders,” we call ourselves “nuclear resisters,” but the peace movement’s resistance has never garnered much more than a “pfft” from the police, the masters of war, or the courts that protect them. That’s why I’ll likely be left alone at passport control when I return. (I was.)

But in view of the warrantless, secret police snatching and detention of nonviolent immigrants and students, without due process and even in violation of court orders, Sally Quinn’s withering warning gives pause. “The hallmark of this administration is cruelty and sadism, vengefulness carried out with glee.” As if to prove the point, Trump’s richest friend, the Afrikaner Elon Musk, has declared: “The fundamental weakness of Western civilization is empathy.” Jawohl, Herr Musk! Cue the stiff-arm salute.

iodine-131, cobalt-60, carbon-14, tritium, technetium, neptunium, and americium.

Tepco says the deadly sandbags will be “sealed in dedicated containers” and moved to a temporary storage site. The company’s plan for long-term containment of this radioactive waste was not outlined and Tepco was not compelled by the press or the government to explain its strategy.

In Tokyo, the Citizens Nuclear Information Center (CNIC) reports that the sandbags have deteriorated, and cannot be recovered with the bags intact, forcing engineers to consider pumping them out together with the basement’s stagnant water, and then enclosing it all in containers.

Slow decommissioning at risk from quakes

Until at least 2027, the sandbags in addition to tons of highly radioactive sludge produced by filtering contaminated cooling water has to be kept in an area still at risk of flooding from potential earthquakes and tsunamis, the CNIC reported.

A March 31 report by Japan’s Cabinet Office’s disaster management working group says that a long-predicted “mega-quake,” if it occurs as anticipated along the Nankai Trough off Japan’s southwest Pacific coast, would likely trigger huge tsunamis, destroy thousands of buildings, spawn mass fires, cost Japan \$1.81 trillion, and potentially kill 300,000 people. Under the report’s worst-case scenario, a magnitude-9 earthquake could see 1.23 million evacuees fleeing the area, or about 10% of its total population.

The Nankai trough is where the Philippine Sea Plate is subducting under the Eurasian Plate and accumulating tectonic pressure that can snap. The magnitude 9.1 undersea tectonic eruption of March 11, 2011 — Japan’s worst ever recorded earthquake whose power smashed reactor foundations at Fukushima Daiichi and flooded the site with tsunami waves — moved the island of Honshu, Japan’s largest, an astounding eight feet eastward.

Japan is one of the earth’s most earthquake-prone areas, and because of Fukushima’s daily accumulation of contaminated cooling water, some 1.3 million tonnes of this highly radioactive liquid waste is held in 1,000 giant tanks near the coast. So the sludge containers, the sandbags, and the 1,000 wastewater tanks are all vulnerable to daily tremors and the dreaded mega-quake.



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