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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND
HUMAN RESOURCES

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

September 29, 1983

The Honorable James A. Baker III
Chief of Staff and
Assistant to the President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. Baker:

Representatives of the United States have recently signed a "Compact of Free Association" with representatives of our trust territories in Micronesia. The compact contains commitments that must be approved by the Congress. Now that the compact has been ratified by the islanders, we assume that the administration will send us the necessary legislation this fall.

It is our suggestion that you at the White House and we in the Congress strive to insure that there is no impediment to expeditious Congressional action on the compact. For this reason we felt impelled to inform you that our constituents are concerned with the implications of Section 177. Through Section 177, the United States for the first time admits culpability for radiation damages resulting from our Pacific nuclear testing program. Section 177 establishes a \$150 million trust fund for the Marshall Islanders to compensate them for these damages. The situation and grievances of the Marshall Islanders are similar to the situation and grievances of those American citizens who lived downwind of the Nevada Test Site during the continental atmospheric nuclear bomb tests. The cry we are beginning to hear from our constituents is that it is neither ethical nor just to accommodate the concerns of the Marshall Islanders while ignoring similar concerns of American citizens.

We ask the administration to empower an official or agency to work with us toward an equitable resolution of the American claims of damages. Twenty years have passed since the atmospheric nuclear blasts ended in the Nevada desert. Our constituents are becoming more vehement in their expressions that this administration should put to rest the specter of injustice that haunts both our nuclear defense program and those families that lived in the shadow of the Nevada Test Site. The applicability

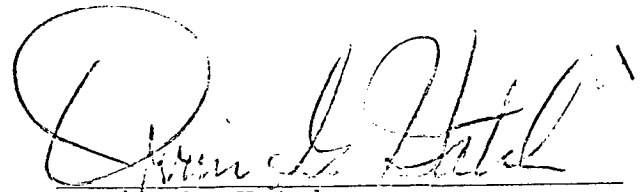
The Honorable James A. Baker III
September 29, 1983
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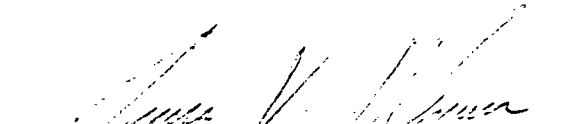
of a trust fund should be considered. There are other possibilities as well; some of these have already been outlined in proposed legislation.

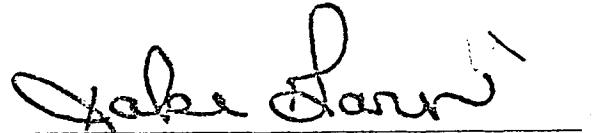
Our constituents are insisting that fairness is a requisite of good government. Therefore, your consideration of our request is appreciated. We and our staffs are prepared to begin work on this project immediately.

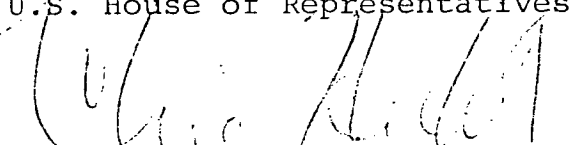
Sincerely,



Dennis DeConcini
United States Senator

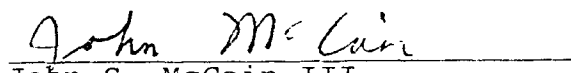

Orrin G. Hatch
United States Senator



James V. Hansen
U.S. House of Representatives

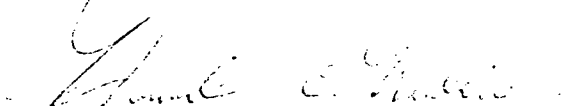

Jake Garn
United States Senator



Chic Hecht
United States Senator

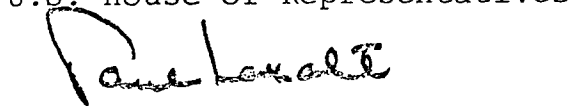

Dan Marriott
U.S. House of Representatives


John S. McCain III
U.S. House of Representatives


James F. McNulty, Jr.
U.S. House of Representatives


Howard C. Nielson
U.S. House of Representatives


Barbara F. Vucanovich
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Paul Laxalt
United States Senator