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By _____

Thank you for the opportunity to address you this morning. My name is R G Hunt, and I am 58 years old. I live in Waterflow, New Mexico, adjacent to the San Juan Generating Station and the adjoining coal mine. I own and operate a small family business on land my grandfather established in the early 1940's, where I've raised my four children.

For generations, we drank from a fresh water well on our property, without any adverse effects. Our animals grazed nearby and drank from the natural springs and the arroyo during the irrigation season. These water sources were healthy and very productive for our business, which provides meat to the neighboring Native American tribes.

In 1972 Public Service Company (PNM) built the San Juan Power Plant and began using the dry arroyo to discharge their wastewater. They began burying fly ash in the nearby dry streambeds, rather than into lined ponds, which then leached into our underground aquifers, contaminating our good water with very high levels of arsenic, selenium, potassium, chromium, lead, sulfate and many others.

By 1975 after the dumping of the coal ash began, my family started to get sick. I was diagnosed with heavy metal poisoning with extremely high arsenic, iron, lead and selenium levels. I lost nearly 100 pounds in less than a year. I was so weak I couldn't stand or work, and wasn't expected to live. For several years, my diet consisted of steamed chicken, squash, and potatoes. Any variation caused extreme diarrhea, nausea, and vomiting. My stomach ached and I suffered constant indigestion. My wife was sick most of the time with similar symptoms. We both had difficulty comprehending simple conversations. Her body became misshapen causing many medical

complications that remain today. Our children lost weight and complained of stomachaches. They had constant indigestion and diarrhea. Their hair was falling out and unhealthy looking. Their teeth and eyesight were compromised to the extent they still wear glasses and require frequent monitoring. Their teachers reported that they had difficulty with simple tasks of concentration and comprehension. One son was enrolled in special classes throughout his education.

Two days before Christmas in 1982, PNM approached us offering us \$2,500 to sign a release as a “good neighbor” gesture on their part. We asked them, instead, to cover the cost of hooking into the public water system for our family. They refused.

For two years, we bought drinking water and carried it into our home until we could afford the connection fees for the public water system. Once we stopped using the well, we began, slowly, to improve. My wife, kids, and I had been sick for over ten years. My animals were not so fortunate. I watched 1,400 sheep slowly suffer and die from the lack of safe drinking water. Within two years I lost my entire sheep herd and took outside jobs, rather than risk selling contaminated meat to my customers.

Although they lined the ponds, as required by an EPA enforcement action and fine in 1984, PNM set up an agreement that the fly ash would be returned to the neighboring BHP San Juan Coal Mine and buried in the unlined pits. The result is that the fly ash and scrubber sludge continues to contaminate the arroyo and groundwater through unlined sites.

My children are grown and married, now. Two sons have served several tours of duty in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Germany. All have some evidences of the childhood problems they experienced due to the polluted water. My daughters have had very difficult pregnancies and deliveries,

which doctors have said may be the result of the childhood poisoning. I have three grandchildren who have been diagnosed autistic, (linked to heavy metal poisoning in their mothers) and another who is ADHD.

My brother developed Multiple Sclerosis and spent 20 years in a care unit. My father died of cancer. Four of my step brothers and sisters have died prematurely, due to cancer and cancer-related illnesses. All were under the age of 40 and healthy, athletic children throughout their high school years with no apparent contributing illnesses. All drank from these same polluted water wells and springs.

I rely heavily on others to help me with the management and operation of my business, because, although recovered, I still suffer many side effects from the poisoning.

In conclusion, this is only the story of my family. I have many neighbors with similar stories. Some have lost young children. Others have children and parents with major health problems. Many have lost their livelihoods, their animals, and the ability to provide for their families because of the pollution that has come down the Shumway Arroyo and through our underground water sources from improperly disposed coal ash. They, too, were offered “good neighbor settlements” from PNM in exchange for their silence and agreement to sign a “hold harmless” contract.

My experience is that the energy industry cannot be entrusted with innocent lives or to regulate themselves, for the good of the community, in lieu of a profit for their stockholders. I urge you to take every measure available to you to prevent this from happening to anyone, anywhere in our nation, ever again.