



## Utah Diné Bikéyah

- a non-profit supporting Native Tribes working together to **Protect Bears Ears** -

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### **White Mesa Utes to march against Energy Fuels White Mesa Uranium Mill**

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**SALT LAKE CITY** – Malcolm Lehi will walk ten miles to the Energy Fuels White Mesa Uranium Mill from the White Mesa Ute Recreation Center Saturday morning.

Lehi, who also serves as a board member for Utah Diné Bikéyah, is a part of a growing number of Ute, Diné and other concerned Native American community members from San Juan County and across Indian Country that will walk in the White Mesa Ute Community Protest and Spiritual Walk.

The walk begins at 11 a.m. on Saturday and is co-sponsored by White Mesa Concerned Community members, Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice, Canyon Country Rising Tide, Uranium Watch, Clean Up the Mines, Gila River Alliance for a Clean Environment and PANDOS, all of which oppose uranium development by Energy Fuels Inc.

“As Ute people, we always think as far as (into the future) to the children that are not even born,” Lehi said. “We always think that way, because we do not know what will become or what will be when their time comes. The importance of this walk is healing.”

The unborn, future generation, Lehi said, is what inspires him to keep fighting for his Ute people and their connections to the Bears Ears landscape.

“We do not want our people to be removed from our homelands,” Lehi said, explaining that ongoing threats of uranium could result in his people leaving their ancestral lands due in part to contamination. It is the main reason Lehi will walk Saturday to object to Energy Fuels’ proposed development, which has received approval from the Bureau of Land Management to mine uranium just west of Bears Ears National Monument.

Lehi also claims that his Ute people suffer from high cancer rates, which he associates with the legacy of uranium mining and milling, including from the nearby Energy Fuels White Mesa Uranium Mill. The White Mesa Uranium Mill is the only operating conventional uranium mill in the U.S.

According to the Utah Department of Health, the age-adjusted cancer death rates for the San Juan County Local Health District is 149.8 per 100,000 persons. San Juan County’s Local Health District cancer death rate is much higher than the overall state of Utah, which is about 126.6 per 100,000 persons. Of all counties in Utah, San Juan County is second highest behind the Southeast Local Health District at 152.1 per 100,000 persons. Data for this period is from 2013-2015.

“Cancer is within our area. It is also in the Blanding and Monticello areas, with the uranium sites that have been covered up. We do not want birth defects in our kids that are not even born yet,” he said.

Carl Moore, who serves as the board chair for PANDOS and is of Hopi descent, calls on all people to turn out for the White Mesa Community Protest and Spiritual Walk, specifically to unite with the Ute community.

“Our Ute relatives are still being oppressed and contaminated by the toxicity of uranium,” Moore said in a statement. “All of the uranium in the U.S. are still being processed on Native land.”

Moore added that tailings from the ponds at the mill are leaking and spreading into soil and contaminating groundwater. Now is the time for the American public to stand behind the Ute people and other tribes who are fighting to protect their ancestral homelands.

The public is welcome to engage with the coalition of concerned Native Americans and environmental protector allies, which is an opportunity to put pressure on Energy Fuels, Inc., not to proceed with their development. “Please stand with us in the strength of unity and prayer,” Moore said.

**Who:** White Mesa Concerned Community members, Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice, Canyon Country Rising Tide, Uranium Watch, Clean Up the Mines, Gila River Alliance for a Clean Environment and PANDOS.

**What:** White Mesa Ute Community Protest and Spiritual Walk

**When:** Saturday, May 19, 2018 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**Where:** White Mesa Ute Community Center to Energy Fuels White Mesa Uranium Mill

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