



ADVISORY BOARD ON RADIATION AND WORKER HEALTH

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August 30, 2009

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The Honorable Brian Higgins
United States House of Representatives
431 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Higgins:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of June 4, 2009 concerning the Special Exposure Cohort petition from the Bethlehem Steel Claimants Action Group. Copies of the letter have been distributed to all of the members of the Advisory Board on Radiation and Worker Health, and the letter was also read into the public record during the Board's recent meeting on July 27, 2009 in Cincinnati, Ohio.

You specifically requested that the Board consider having one of its upcoming meetings in Buffalo, New York so that members of the Claimants Action group would have an opportunity to interact with the Board and convey their concerns about the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act (EEOICPA). We appreciate the invitation to return to Buffalo for a meeting, and we will seriously consider it as a meeting site for one of our meetings in the year ahead.

We are aware of the fact that many claimants have experienced frustration with regard to both the time that has been required to evaluate claims and petitions as well as the processes involved in evaluating and completing actions on claims. As you know, NIOSH and the Board have reviewed a number of issues relating to the Bethlehem Steel claims over the past few years. Also, during this time, a large number of the Bethlehem Steel claims have been processed. As of July 29, 2009, some 824 cases were sent to NIOSH by the Department of Labor for dose reconstruction and 795 of these cases have had dose reconstructions completed. We note that 382 (48 %) of the Bethlehem Steel claimants who have undergone dose reconstruction have been compensated through the EEOICPA program.

The Board also approved sending copies of this letter to your colleagues who cosigned the letter of June 4.

Thank you for your continued interest in the EEOICPA program and the activities of this Board.

Sincerely,
[Signature on file.]
Paul L. Ziemer, Ph.D.
Chairman, ABRWH