



ADVISORY BOARD ON RADIATION AND WORKER HEALTH
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July 12, 2008

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The Honorable Michael O. Leavitt
Secretary of Health and Human Services
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Mr. Secretary:

The Advisory Board on Radiation and Worker Health (The Board) has evaluated SEC Petition - 00089 under the statutory requirements established by EEOICPA and incorporated into 42 CFR Sec. 83.13 (c) (1) and 42 CFR Sec. 83.13 (c) (3). The Board respectfully recommends Special Exposure Cohort status be accorded to all Atomic Weapons Employer employees of the Spencer Chemical Company/Jayhawk Works from January 1, 1956 through December 31, 1961 for a number of work days aggregating at least 250 work days, occurring either solely under this employment, or in combination with work days within the parameters established for other classes of employees in the Special Exposure Cohort. This recommendation is based on the following factors:

- Spencer Chemical Company/Jayhawk Works conducted chemical processes to produce uranium and thorium oxides and uranium carbides from other forms, including uranium hexafluoride. Physical forms of the material at the site included fused ceramic pellets and finely divided powder.
- The facility processed several types of uranium bearing materials for use in the nuclear fuel cycle, including dissolution and purification of metal scrap to recover uranium oxide; and hydrolyzation and purification of scrap uranium hexafluoride to recover uranium oxide. NIOSH does not have information about the nature of the thorium operations at the plant.
- Although documents from the period indicate the individuals were on a bioassay program, no individual bioassay records have been located.

- Although documents from the period indicate that workers wore dosimeters, no dosimetry records have been discovered other than a single record for one individual. The lack of external monitoring records prevents NIOSH from reconstructing total external dose, although doses from uranium can be reconstructed from project technical documents by means of the procedures set forth in NIOSH Technical Bulletin TBD-6000.
- Although documents from the period indicate that air monitoring, radiation surveys, and contamination surveys were conducted, results from such surveys have not been located.
- The lack of information on thorium operations prevents NIOSH from reconstructing doses from thorium.

In its evaluation report, NIOSH has concluded that it is likely that radiation doses for this group of workers at Spencer Chemical Co. during this time period could have endangered the health of members of this class. The Board concurs. The Board also notes that NIOSH is able to reconstruct doses from medical x-rays by means of existing project technical documents.

Based on these considerations, and on the discussions and deliberations at our June 24-26, 2008 Board meeting, the Board recommends that this Special Exposure Cohort petition be granted.

Enclosed is supporting documentation from the Advisory Board Meeting held June 24-26 2008 in St. Louis, Missouri. This documentation includes transcripts of the deliberations, copies of the petition and the NIOSH review thereof, and related documents distributed by NIOSH. If any of these items are unavailable at this time, they will follow shortly.

Sincerely,

SIGNATURE ON FILE

Paul L. Ziemer, Ph.D.
Chair

Enc.