



ADVISORY BOARD ON RADIATION AND WORKER HEALTH

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March 28, 2011

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The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius
Secretary
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Madam Secretary:

The Advisory Board on Radiation and Worker Health (The Board) has evaluated Special Exposure Cohort (SEC) Petition 00174 concerning workers at the Wah Chang facility in Albany, Oregon, under the statutory requirements established by the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Act of 2000 (EEOICPA) and incorporated into 42 CFR Sec. 83.13. The Board respectfully recommends that SEC status be accorded to all Atomic Weapons Employer (AWE) employees who worked in any building at the Wah Chang facility in Albany Oregon, for the operational period from January 1, 1971 through December 31, 1972, 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 one or more other classes of employees included in the SEC.

This recommendation is based on the following factors:

- People working at Wah Chang during the time period in question worked on the processing of uranium for the production of nuclear weapons.
- The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) review of available monitoring data, as well as process and source term information for various production activities at Wah Chang, found that it lacked adequate information necessary to complete individual dose reconstruction with sufficient accuracy for internal and external doses from exposures to thorium and thorium by-products during the time period in question. The Board concurs with this determination.
- NIOSH determined that health may have been endangered for these Wah Chang facility workers during the time period in question. The Board also concurs with this determination.

NIOSH has recommended that dose reconstructions are feasible for workers at the Wah Chang facility in Albany, Oregon, for the subsequent residual contamination period from January 1, 1973 through October 31, 2009. NIOSH

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found that it has access to adequate exposure monitoring and other information necessary to do individual dose reconstructions with sufficient accuracy for members of this group, and therefore a class covering this group should not be added to the SEC.

Based on these considerations and the discussion at the February 23-25, 2011 Board meeting held in Augusta, Georgia, the Board recommends that the class covering all AWE employees who worked at Wah Chang from January 1, 1971 through December 31, 1972 be added to the SEC.

Enclosed is the documentation from the Board meeting(s) where this Special Exposure Cohort class was discussed. The documentation includes transcripts of the deliberations, copies of the petition, the NIOSH review thereof, and related materials. If any of these items are unavailable at this time, they will follow shortly.

Sincerely,

[Signature on file]

James M. Melius, M.D., Dr. PH
Chairman, ABRWH

Enclosure