

December 21, 2006 - Slaughter Demands Timely Compensation for Linde Ceramics Workers

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, December 21, 2006

Slaughter Demands Timely Compensation for Linde Ceramics Workers

Washington, DC - Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D-Fairport), Ranking Member of the House Rules Committee, today sent letters regarding compensation for former workers of Tonawanda's Linde Ceramics Plant to Department of Labor Secretary Elaine Chao and to Paul Ziemer, Chairman of the Advisory Board on Radiation and Worker Health.

The letters demanded a status update on Linde compensation claims and called on the Advisory Board to act on a recent audit of the Linde Ceramics site profile.

"The Atomic Energy Workers at Linde helped defend and secure America for future generations," said Rep. Slaughter. "Now the government has an obligation to compensate them for this dangerous work which robbed them of their health. I believe the Administration must stop shortchanging these workers and do everything they can to make timely payments to the claimants."

Many former Linde Ceramics workers are still waiting for their claims to be addressed and several have been denied

benefits. Although a July 2006 audit of the Linde Ceramics site profile contained several recommendations for changes and enhancement to determine workers eligibility for compensation, the audit has not yet been acted upon.

BACKGROUND:

The audit firm SC&A completed their audit of the Linde Ceramics site profile in July 2006. In their audit report, SC&A made several recommendations for the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) to revise the Linde site profile in order to improve the results for the dose reconstruction. Both the site profile and the dose reconstruction are necessary for any worker in determining whether a worker qualifies for benefits if they are not part of a special exposure cohort.

Several site profiles in facilities across the country have been audited. Once an audit is completed, NIOSH has the opportunity to respond to the auditors' recommendations. A working group is formed to review the auditors' recommendations and NIOSH's response. The Advisory Board then directs NIOSH to make whatever changes they agree with in the audit report. Finally, NIOSH makes necessary revisions to the site profile.

The complete text of Rep. Slaughter's letter to Paul Ziemer is included below:

Dr. Paul L. Ziemer, Chairman

Advisory Board on Radiation and Worker Health

4676 Columbia Parkway, MS: C-46

Cincinnati, OH 45226

Dear Chairman Ziemer:

Thank you for recommending the Linde Ceramics facility in Tonawanda, NY for special exposure cohort (SEC) status and directing an auditor to review the Site Profile. As you know, in July 2006, SC&A released its audit of the Linde Ceramics Site Profile, which included several recommendations for enhancement and change. I am writing to request an update on the status of the audit as it relates to the Linde Ceramics facility.

Many of my constituents were employed at this facility for a number of years. With the enactment of Energy Employee Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act, several of these workers have sought assistance from my office in obtaining compensation benefits. To my dismay, many are still waiting for their claims to be addressed. Others have been denied benefits despite the recent audit that found several errors, including a lack of consideration about how to deal with non-uranium radionuclides at the site.

Given the time sensitivity of reviewing claims and the fact that some of the recommendations stemming from the audit could impact the outcome of these claims, when will a Working Group be formed to review the Linde Ceramics Site Profile audit and when do you expect the Advisory Board to act on this audit? Further, as the Working Group moves forward in its review of the audit recommendations, I ask that you keep me and my staff informed of any meetings and decisions relating to Linde Ceramics.

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Louise M. Slaughter

Member of Congress

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