

**P.R.E.S.S**  
**Portsmouth/Piketon Residents for Environmental Safety and Security**  
**&**  
**NNWJ**  
**National Nuclear Workers for Justice**

**P.O. Box 136, Portsmouth, Ohio 45662**  
**Contact: Vina Colley (740) 357-8916 or Terri Ann Smith (304) 429-2053**

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Majority of Portsmouth/Piketon Sick and Dying Atomic Workers of The Cold War Still Not Compensated**

#### **National and Local Activist Groups Lobby Congress To Intervene**

Over 70% of eligible nuclear workers formerly employed at the nuclear weapons complex in Piketon during The Cold War still have not been compensated for work related injuries and illnesses according to latest available statistics.<sup>1</sup> Stats at other national nuclear sites are worse with over 90% workers still uncompensated.<sup>2</sup>

Upon demands from activist groups across the country, on October 23, 2007, a special hearing was held in Washington, D.C., to review the effectiveness of the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act (EEOICPA). Although enacted in 2000 on the premise of speeding up the compensation process, activists claim the Act has done nothing of the sort.

At the hearing in D.C., congressional leaders were presented with numerous documents and testimonies from both activists and the GAO (Government Accountability Office) officials. Among problems sited were mismanagement and negligence of the Federal Advisory Board, the Department of Energy (DOE), the Department of Labor (DOL) and of the government appointed health physicists implementing the highly debated "Dose Reconstruction" clauses of the Act. The general consensus of attendees concluded that there are not enough of the workers' medical records available to meet the

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<sup>1</sup> Dayton Daily News, "Ohio's Nuclear Legacy", by Lynn Hulsey and Tom Beyerlein

<sup>2</sup> La Jicarita News, "Administrative Cost of the EEOICPA Program and Conflicts of Interest Associated With It", Mark Schiller

stringency of Dose Reconstruction. Senator Jeff Bingaman of New Mexico made the suggestion that the DOL should rely more heavily on the word of applicants when DOE paperwork is not available for Dose Reconstruction”.<sup>3</sup>

Terri Ann Smith and Vina Colley of NNWJ (National Nuclear Workers for Justice) and P.R.E.S.S. (Portsmouth /Piketon Residents for Environmental Safety and Security) contend that Dose Reconstruction, the system outlined within the Act for the re-creation of radiation and chemical exposures to workers, is steeped in fallacy and corruption by design.

Smith states, “Auditing of Dose Reconstruction is primarily designated to Sanford, Cohen & Associates Inc. (hired by the Federal Advisory Board) whose clients include the DOE and other federal agencies.<sup>4</sup> This is a major conflict of interest. The inclination to complicate and prolong Dose Reconstruction to obtain more funding for Sanford, Cohen and Associates (SC&A) and the DOE is strong. The longer the process, the more job security. SC&A’s auditing contract is already in the millions.<sup>5</sup> More funds have been paid out in administrative costs to federal employees of the DOE and the likes of SC&A than have been paid to workers.”<sup>6</sup>

Colley (also a Cold War atomic worker) states, “For many workers, dosimetry badges were not worn, or if they were, doses were not recorded. Members of the Advisory Board knew this. Recently, it has been shown that early dosimetry badges were not accurate, and in some cases one badge was used for every employee’s dose for that day. Medical testing of workers, such as urinalysis and blood tests were found to be insufficient or non-existent.”

“Re-dose is also problematic due to missing or destroyed worker records. For this reason, Piketon was the first of ten national sites deemed a Special Exposure Cohort (SEC), meaning that recreating worker exposures was not necessary for some cases to be considered for EEOICPA claims.” said Colley.

Further, plant maintenance was often inept. A maintenance document from Marten Marietta showed that a flange, which would normally be sealed with two bolts and special sealing material, had been repaired with *masking tape*. Therefore there was no way to know how much radioactive material had escaped through the flange into the work area. As this report was from 1996, there is no way of knowing how much legacy waste exists in these buildings.<sup>7</sup> Again, this shows that re-dose is virtually impossible. “This maintenance problem is representative of the problems at the A-Plant - problems that have been shrouded in secrecy and corruption for decades.” said Joni Fearing, whose father died of cancer from working at the Portsmouth plant.

NNWJ and P.R.E.S.S. are circulating a national petition to Congress to eliminate Dose Reconstruction from the Act, and to compensate all eligible applicants immediately. To sign the petition, contact Vina Colley at [vcolley@earthlink.net](mailto:vcolley@earthlink.net) or Terri Ann Smith at (304) 429-2053.

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<sup>3</sup> News from Senator Jeff Bingaman, October 23, 2007

<sup>4</sup> Sanford Cohen and Associates, Inc. Troy State University

<sup>5</sup> GAO report, March, 2006

<sup>6</sup> La Jicarita News, “Administrative Cost of the EEOICPA Program and Conflicts of Interest Associated With It, Mark Schiller

<sup>7</sup> Inspection of Portsmouth, July 22, 1996