



March 9, 2009

The Honorable Hilda Solis
Secretary
U.S. Department of Labor
200 N Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Secretary Solis:

The American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA), the premier association of occupational and environmental health and safety professionals, wishes to take this opportunity to congratulate you as the newly confirmed Secretary of Labor.

As the workplace continues to change and become more diversified and as the need for workplace health and safety continues to expand globally, AIHA believes your appointment as Secretary of Labor is one of the most important appointments of the new administration. The worker health and safety agenda is a long one, and we believe one of the ways it needs to be addressed is to carry out one of the major themes of the Obama-Biden campaign, that being an ability to bring diverse viewpoints together.

As you move forward addressing the many workplace and economic problems facing our country, we wish to pass along three very important issues for you to consider when addressing the specific issue of occupational safety and health.

- 1) Of immediate importance is the appointment of an individual to serve as Assistant Secretary of Labor for OSHA. Many names are being circulated as possible appointees to this position; however, before you make a final decision please consider what AIHA believes are the minimum qualifications the individual should possess if chosen to lead OSHA:
 - A lifelong commitment to health and safety, preferably a health and safety professional;
 - Comprehensive academic training in occupational health and safety;
 - At least 15 years of technical experience in occupational health and safety;
 - Proven management experience in implementing health and safety programs; and
 - The vision and ability to build coalitions and consensus among diverse groups to effectively promote a health and safety agenda accepted by all.

- 2) A second area of immediate concern is the economic stimulus package recently approved by Congress and signed by President Obama. AIHA recently sent a letter to the President urging him to direct OSHA to ensure that the new jobs created by the stimulus package include adequate workplace protections for these new workers. With 600,000 of these jobs intended for the construction industry and another 400,000 for manufacturing, workplace health and safety is vital. The stimulus package contained \$80 million as an additional appropriation to the Secretary of Labor to address workplace issues. AIHA urges you to appropriate a considerable portion of this \$80 million to OSHA for the specific purpose of hiring additional OSHA personnel to work solely on the new job creation projects across the country. These positions could include inspectors, consultation experts, compliance assistance personnel, or other needs identified.

We also urge you to do whatever possible to work with the President and others to require contracts awarded for new stimulus construction and manufacturing projects include the hiring of an appropriate number of occupational safety and health professionals to oversee the day to day workplace health and safety of the workers. No contract should be awarded unless it includes adequate personnel to oversee worker health and safety.

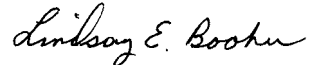
- 3) Finally, on more of a long-term goal, we urge you to direct OSHA to assume a leadership position working with stakeholders to seek out a solution to the long-standing problem of how best to update the permissible exposure limits (PELs). It is unconscionable that workers in the United States are covered by PELs adopted some 40 or more years ago. The only way for this effort to succeed is with the support of you and the administration. We urge you to consider this a priority for the Agency.

With more than 60 years of commitment to the protection of workers, their community, and the environment, and more than 10,000 members from a cross-section of industry, private business, labor, academia, and government, AIHA looks forward to working with you to see that every worker goes home healthy and safe.

With that in mind, I believe it may be of **benefit** to you and AIHA if we could further discuss these issues. I will direct AIHA staff to contact your office to schedule a short meeting with you. I am sure you are hearing from many stakeholders in labor and industry and believe it may of great **interest** to you to hear from those who serve on the front line of worker health and safety each and every day.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Should you have any immediate questions, do not hesitate to contact me. Regardless, I will see that AIHA staff contacts your office to schedule a few minutes of your time to discuss the issues expressed here.

Sincerely,



Lindsay E. Booher, CIH, CSP
AIHA President

cc: AIHA Board of Directors
Peter O'Neil, Executive Director
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