

April 24, 2018

The Honorable R. Alexander Acosta
U.S. Secretary of Labor
Department of Labor
200 Constitution Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Secretary Acosta,

As organizations committed to worker safety, good government, whistleblower protections, strong public health standards, and science-based decision-making, we are deeply concerned with recent reports that the Department of Labor (DOL) is stalling, disbanding, and allowing the lapse of several critical federal advisory committees at the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).¹ This is yet another example of an alarming pattern of ignoring scientific and expert advice by this Administration.²

At your department, these committees are critical because, among other things, they make recommendations that ensure strong science-based workplace protections for construction workers, help sick nuclear plant facility workers get health benefits, and assist in guiding the implementation of science-based protections for workers from exposure to harmful chemicals like beryllium. In addition, some of these committees help answer emerging questions that guide better evidence-based policies to safeguard American workers and provide guidance to strengthen compliance with the 22 whistleblower statutes administered by OSHA. These advisory panels are composed of experts from labor unions, industry, and the public health community whose key voices in policymaking should be significantly valued by the department and OSHA.

The undersigned organizations are calling for you to:

- Issue a call for nominees to fill vacant spots on the Maritime Advisory Committee for Occupational Safety and Health (MACOSH)
- Recharter and issue a call for nominees to fill vacant spots on the Whistleblower Protection Advisory Committee (WPAC)
- Issue a call for nominees to fill vacant spots on the National Advisory Committee on Occupational Safety and Health (NACOSH)

¹ Moss, R. 2018. Trump's Labor Department Eviscerates Workplace Safety Panels. *ProPublica*, March 29. Online at <https://www.propublica.org/article/trumps-labor-department-eviscerates-workplace-safety-panels>. Accessed April 16, 2018; Moss, R. 2018. Injured Nuclear Workers Finally Had Support, The Trump Administration Has Mothballed It. *ProPublica*, March 9. Online at <https://www.propublica.org/article/injured-nuclear-workers-finally-had-support-the-trump-administration-has-mothballed-it>. Accessed April 16, 2018.

² Reed, G., Shulman, S., Hansel, P., and Goldman, G. 2018. Abandoning Science Advice: One Year In, the Trump Administration is Sidelining Science Advisory Committees. Cambridge, MA: Union of Concerned Scientists. Online at <https://www.ucsusa.org/sites/default/files/attach/2018/01/abandoning-science-advice-full-report.pdf>, Accessed April 16, 2018.

- Issue a call for nominees to fill vacant spots on the Advisory Committee on Construction Safety and Health (ACCSH)
- With agency authority, recharter the Federal Advisory Council on Occupational Safety & Health (FACOSH) and issue a call for nominees.
- Promptly complete the process of selecting members to serve on the Advisory Board on Toxic Substances and Worker Health, with balanced representation from the scientific, medical, and claimant communities.³

This week is Worker Memorial Week, a solemn week to remember those who have lost their lives to workplace hazards and to recommit ourselves to protecting our critical workforce. As Secretary of Labor, you can help honor the lives of those who have suffered from unsafe work environments by reestablishing the importance of and reactivating these critical worker safety advisory boards. It is critical that these advisory boards be given the opportunity to meet and make recommendations as well as help implement science-based safeguards so that everyone can benefit from a safer workplace.

Sincerely,

A Better Balance
 Alliance of Nuclear Worker Advocacy Groups
 AFL-CIO
 AFSCME
 Atomic Worker Advocacy BHSC Member
 BlueGreen Alliance
 Center for Progressive Reform
 Child Labor Coalition
 Coalition Against Contamination Kansas City, Mo.
 Communications Workers of America
 CUNY Graduate School of Public Health
 Empire State Consumer Project, Inc.
 Government Accountability Project
 Institute for Agriculture & Trade Policy
 Interfaith Worker Justice
 IBEW 1253
 International Chemical Workers Union Council (ICWUC)
 Jacobs Institute of Women's Health
 Maine AFL-CIO
 Maine Labor Group on Health
 Maine State Building & Construction Trades Council
 The Mississippi Workers' Center for Human Rights
 National Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health
 National Consumers League

³ Murray, P. and M. Cantwell. 2018. Letter to Department of Labor Secretary Alexander Acosta, December 13.

National Employment Law Project
National LGBTQ Task Force
National Nurses United
New Hampshire Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health
Oxfam America
Project On Government Oversight
Public Citizen
Restaurant Opportunities Center of Chicago
SafeWork Washington
Sciencecorps
Southern Illinois Nuclear Energy Workers (SINEW)
UA Local 716
Union of Concerned Scientists
United Steelworkers
University of Illinois at Chicago, School of Public Health
Utility Workers Union of America, AFL-CIO
WisCOSH, Inc.
Worksafe

Cc: The Honorable Scott Dahl, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General