

BRIAN HIGGINS
27TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
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BORDER AND MARITIME SECURITY
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COUNTERTERRORISM
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January 24, 2013

Stuart Hinnefeld
Director
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Dear Director Hinnefeld and Dr. Wade,

I write you today out of concern over the delay your agency has exhibited in considering the mounting evidence asserted by former Bethlehem Steel workers that the Lackawanna rolling mill was subject to an inadequate clean-up of uranium rolling conducted during 1949-1952 as well as further government-sanctioned uranium rolling that took place past that time period. I urge you to thoroughly and expeditiously consider these facts to find appropriate an extension of the residual contamination period for exposure at this site until 1976, when records indicate a proper clean-up commenced.

Further, in August 2012 you met with the retired steel workers and the community at large regarding this evidence. My office has been diligent in providing your agency with notarized documentation from former workers summarizing their factual recollections. Those assertions include:

- Contamination from rolling that took place during the period under which coverage currently exists was not adequately cleaned up. (Trella).
- That overhead cranes utilized in the rolling mills were not cleaned until the mid-1950s at the earliest, and that such cleanings were inadequate and workers cleaning the cranes were subjected to substandard safety precautions and had no idea what they were cleaning up (Slaght, Burger).
- Contentions that Bethlehem Steel acted as a contractor on uranium rolling for the U.S. government long after 1952 (Strazyck) and that uranium rolling took place in the 1950s and beyond. (Kosanovich)

- Workers at the Bethlehem Steel plant wore radiation dosimetry badges into the 1960s, not knowing what it was monitoring (as official U.S. government recognition of the nuclear program was not made until decades later). (Strazyck).

It has now been nearly six months since that meeting and we have received no demonstrable progress from your agency on your efforts to extend the residual contamination period, allowing these retired workers and their survivors the opportunity to receive compensation for deadly illnesses caused by this exposure which our government has been too slow to recognize.

Therefore, I urge you to move swiftly toward this conclusion of extending the residual contamination period. Please let me know if I can be of further assistance in this effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brian Higgins". The signature is stylized and fluid, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

BRIAN HIGGINS
Member of Congress