

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).<sup>1</sup> This is yet another example of an alarming pattern of ignoring scientific and expert advice by this Administration.<sup>2</sup>

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)

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup>

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

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<sup>3</sup> 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