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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

April 14, 2008

The Honorable Michael O. Leavitt
Secretary
United States Department of Health and Human Services
Hubert Humphrey Building, Room 416 G
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Leavitt:

The Advisory Board on Radiation and Worker Health recently voted to unanimously approve Special Exposure Cohort petition 00057-2 for Hanford site workers for work ranging from 1946 through 1968. I write to strongly support the Board's unanimous decision and urge your timely approval of this important compensation benefit for Hanford workers and their families.

I am proud to have supported the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act (EEOICPA) when it was first created in 2000. For workers who developed an illness from their work, but did not have adequate records to document their exposure to radiation, EEOICPA's Special Exposure Cohort system created a critical path to compensation.

I have repeatedly asked that the testimony and comment of local Hanford workers and their families be considered during the review of Special Exposure Cohort for Hanford. EEOICPA was created for our nation's nuclear workers and their concerns should be viewed as a priority. I hope that you will continue to place a high priority on public comment as you and the Office of Compensation Analysis and Support work to assist our World War II and Cold War heroes.

Your approval of Special Exposure Cohort status for Hanford workers would allow some, who have been unable to secure compensation due to deficiencies in radiation exposure data, to begin receiving the recognition and compensation they deserve. These benefits are of great importance to my constituents and I appreciate your timely consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Doc Hastings
Member of Congress