

bcc: SQH ✓



September 11, 2006

VIA FACSIMILE AND FIRST CLASS MAIL

Dr. Samuel W. Bodman
Secretary of Energy
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20585

Dear Secretary Bodman:

On behalf of the Department of Energy ("DOE") bargaining unit employees represented by the National Treasury Employees Union ("NTEU"), I want to express NTEU's alarm over the DOE's elimination of the Office of Environment, Safety and Health ("EH"). Bargaining unit employees that were formerly a part of EH are proud to be part of an office that performed a vital role in ensuring the safety and health of over 130,000 public and private employees.

The DOE's reorganization is particularly disconcerting given the fact that to date there is no data demonstrating that EH was either inefficient or in need of being dissolved. It is also premature in light of the facts that legislators have requested both Congressional hearings and a GAO audit, and these processes have not had a chance to run their course. The reorganization commingles EH's vital safety and health functions with entirely separate security functions. This will undoubtedly result in the safety and health functions becoming subordinate priorities to the security functions. Moreover, EH's political accountability is lost under DOE's reorganization, because its mission is no longer carried out under the leadership of an Assistant Secretary. NTEU is concerned that these changes will have a direct and negative affect on the lives of many employees and citizens across the country.

NTEU stands with the multiple senators and members of the House of Representatives, former Secretaries of Energy, and governors seeking to have DOE rethink the elimination of EH. NTEU suggests that instead of going through with this elimination, DOE reverse course and bolster EH, so it can achieve even greater results in its vital oversight function. Finally, I trust the agency will keep its commitment to fulfill its duty to bargain over the impact and implementation with NTEU and maintain the status quo until bargaining is complete. I urge DOE to ensure that all of its managers are aware of the agency's bargaining obligations and that they maintain the status quo.

Sincerely,

Colleen M. Kelley
National President

cc: David Schoeberlein, President, NTEU Chapter 213
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