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June 6, 2017

The Honorable Gene Dodaro
Comptroller General
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Dodaro:

In 2000, Congress passed the *Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act* to provide compensation and health benefits to eligible Department of Energy nuclear weapons workers or their survivors. Under Part E of the program, contract workers or their survivors are compensated for medical expenses, impairments, and lost wages resulting from exposure to toxins while working at a covered facility.

To adjudicate Part E claims, the Department of Labor (DOL) relies on the Site Exposure Matrix (SEM) for known links between these toxins and occupational illness. The SEM is updated as new links are identified by the medical and scientific communities. The public can also submit site- or disease-related information to be considered for inclusion in the SEM.

In addition, DOL may reopen previously adjudicated claims based on newly added links which may have affected those claims. However, such steps are limited to instances in which DOL believes a relatively large number of claims are potentially affected. If claimants become aware that a new link had been added to the SEM, they can also ask that a previously denied claim be reopened. Since 2005, DOL has issued five notices in which it announced plans to reopen such claims, but little is known about their outcomes.

We therefore request that Government Accountability Office examine the number of Part E claims that have been reopened as a result of DOL's notices and the extent to which re-adjudicating these claims has resulted in any changes to the final decision to accept or deny the claim.

The Honorable Gene Dodaro

June 6, 2017


Page 2

If you have any questions, please contact Joe Wheeler or Molly Salmi of the Committee on Education and the Workforce at (202) 225-7101.

Sincerely,



Virginia Foxx
Chairwoman



Joe Wilson
Vice Chairman
