



January 22, 2010

The Honorable Richard Durbin
United States Senate
SH-309 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-1304

Dear Senator Durbin:

The American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA) understands you and your colleagues will soon move forward with the jobs bill, HR 2847. As you consider this important legislation, AIHA would like to stress the importance that any jobs created by federal and state agencies, as well as private employers, provide for adequate safety and health protections for these workers.

In January of 2009, AIHA was the first organization to call on President Obama to ensure that any new jobs created through stimulus dollars provide an appropriate number of health and safety professionals be included in this new labor force to protect these workers.

In March of 2009, AIHA contacted Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis urging that the Secretary become involved with health and safety protections for workers hired with stimulus dollars. AIHA suggested there be put in place a requirement that contracts awarded for new stimulus construction and manufacturing projects include the hiring of an appropriate number of occupational safety and health professionals to oversee the day to day workplace health and safety of the workers.

AIHA was pleased that in May of 2009 Secretary Solis issued a memorandum to Cabinet Secretaries urging them to consider their health and safety responsibilities as they made plans for stimulus projects. In addition, the employers who win contracts, who create these jobs, must have exemplary health and safety records and be required to maintain such standards in federally funded contracts.

Now, as you move forward with HR 2847, AIHA urges you to continue to see that workers are protected in the jobs created. To this end, AIHA recommends the bill include a statement underscoring Congress' commitment that federally funded jobs be safe jobs. The recovery should not cost any worker his or health, safety or life.

AIHA is aware the International Safety Equipment Association (ISEA) recently contacted you and offered draft language for a statement that could be included in the bill, as report language or bill text. AIHA supports this draft language, with one additional requirement, and has attached the draft language to this letter.

AIHA is the premier association serving the needs of professionals involved in occupational and environmental health and safety practicing industrial hygiene in industry, government, labor, academic institutions, and independent organizations. The AIHA mission is to promote healthy and safe environments by advancing the science, principles, practice, and value of industrial and occupational hygiene. AIHA is not only committed to protecting and improving worker health, but the health and well-being of adults and children in our communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this request. Should you require additional information about AIHA or if we can be of any further assistance to you, please contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cathy L. Cole". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cathy L. Cole, CIH, CSP
AIHA President

cc: AIHA Board of Directors
Peter O'Neil, Executive Director
Aaron Trippler, Director Government Affairs

Draft Language

Conferees believe health and safety of those working to lift the economy out of the recession is critical. Those who may find work through opportunities created in this bill can ill afford to lose their jobs to a workplace injury. Therefore, the federal and State agencies must make certain any jobs created from the funding provided in this bill, through direct employment, grants or contracting, are safe jobs. This includes making certain workplaces receiving federal funds have a management commitment to safety, contractors receiving federal funds have exemplary safety records and those working on stimulus-funded jobs have the appropriate workplace solutions, protective equipment and training to avoid injury, illness and fatalities.

Furthermore, it is required that each contract awarded to create jobs from this funding include the hiring of a qualified occupational health and safety professional.