

DOE NEWS

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U.S. ENERGY SECRETARY SPENCER ABRAHAM COMMENTS ON COMPLETION OF INVESTIGATIONS INTO WORKER HEALTH AND SITE SAFETY AT HANFORD TANK FARMS

Washington, D.C. - Today, U.S. Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham released the following statement on the completion of investigations into worker health, medical care, and site safety at the Hanford Tank Farms complex in Washington State.

Results of investigations requested by Secretary Abraham and conducted by the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Inspector General and the Office of Independent Oversight and Performance Assurance were released today by the Department of Energy.

Secretary Abraham said, "We are pleased these investigations found no evidence of criminal wrongdoing on the part of DOE managers or contractors; and we remain committed to the highest safety standards to ensure the protection of our workers' safety and health."

The Office of Independent Oversight reported that "several of the allegations, such as allegations about falsification of medical records, were not substantiated, and there were no known cases of workers being exposed to chemical vapors from the Hanford waste tanks in excess of regulatory limits."

Abraham added, "I very much appreciate the effective and independent work of the Department's Inspector General and the Office of Independent Oversight, as well as the state of Washington, in investigating these now unsubstantiated claims of activities detrimental to employee health and safety at the Hanford tank farm complex."

"The DOE and Washington State have demonstrated that a cooperative approach is critical to ensuring appropriate procedures are in-place to protect worker health and we look forward to enhancing the scope and substance of our work with Washington."

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U.S. ENERGY SECRETARY SPENCER ABRAHAM...

"While these reports show worker protection is at a high level, I believe we can continue to improve. Therefore, in the coming days, I will be directing the DOE's Office of Environmental Management to implement recommendations from each of the reports to further enhance worker protections at the Hanford site."

Copies of the Office of Inspector General's report can be found at www.ig.doe.gov/igreports.htm#cal2004.

Copies of the Office of Independent Oversight and Safety Assurance can be found at <http://www.oa.doe.gov/>

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