

(E) The Nevada Test Site, Nevada.

(Pub. L. 106-65, div. C, title XXXI, §3155, Oct. 5, 1999, 113 Stat. 942.)

Editorial Notes

REFERENCES IN TEXT

This subchapter, referred to in text, was in the original “this subtitle”, meaning subtitle D of title XXXI of div. C of Pub. L. 106-65, Oct. 5, 1999, 113 Stat. 931, which is classified principally to this subchapter. For complete classification of subtitle D to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 7383 of this title and Tables.

§ 7383j. Definition of Restricted Data

In this subchapter, the term “Restricted Data” has the meaning given that term in section 2014(y) of this title.

(Pub. L. 106-65, div. C, title XXXI, §3156, Oct. 5, 1999, 113 Stat. 942.)

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SUBCHAPTER XVI—ENERGY EMPLOYEES OCCUPATIONAL ILLNESS COMPENSATION PROGRAM

Editorial Notes

CODIFICATION

This subchapter was enacted as title XXXVI of div. C of the Floyd D. Spence National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001, known as the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act of 2000, and not as part of the Department of Energy Organization Act which comprises this chapter.

§ 7384. Findings; sense of Congress

(a) Findings

The Congress finds the following:

(1) Since World War II, Federal nuclear activities have been explicitly recognized under Federal law as activities that are ultra-hazardous. Nuclear weapons production and testing have involved unique dangers, including potential catastrophic nuclear accidents that private insurance carriers have not covered and recurring exposures to radioactive substances and beryllium that, even in small amounts, can cause medical harm.

(2) Since the inception of the nuclear weapons program and for several decades afterwards, a large number of nuclear weapons workers at sites of the Department of Energy and at sites of vendors who supplied the Cold War effort were put at risk without their knowledge and consent for reasons that, documents reveal, were driven by fears of adverse publicity, liability, and employee demands for hazardous duty pay.

(3) Many previously secret records have documented unmonitored exposures to radiation

and beryllium and continuing problems at these sites across the Nation, at which the Department of Energy and its predecessor agencies have been, since World War II, self-regulating with respect to nuclear safety and occupational safety and health. No other hazardous Federal activity has been permitted to be carried out under such sweeping powers of self-regulation.

(4) The policy of the Department of Energy has been to litigate occupational illness claims, which has deterred workers from filing workers’ compensation claims and has imposed major financial burdens for such employees who have sought compensation. Contractors of the Department have been held harmless and the employees have been denied workers’ compensation coverage for occupational disease.

(5) Over the past 20 years, more than two dozen scientific findings have emerged that indicate that certain of such employees are experiencing increased risks of dying from cancer and non-malignant diseases. Several of these studies have also established a correlation between excess diseases and exposure to radiation and beryllium.

(6) While linking exposure to occupational hazards with the development of occupational disease is sometimes difficult, scientific evidence supports the conclusion that occupational exposure to dust particles or vapor of beryllium can cause beryllium sensitivity and chronic beryllium disease. Furthermore, studies indicate that 98 percent of radiation-induced cancers within the nuclear weapons complex have occurred at dose levels below existing maximum safe thresholds.

(7) Existing information indicates that State workers’ compensation programs do not provide a uniform means of ensuring adequate compensation for the types of occupational illnesses and diseases that relate to the employees at those sites.

(8) To ensure fairness and equity, the civilian men and women who, over the past 50 years, have performed duties uniquely related to the nuclear weapons production and testing programs of the Department of Energy and its predecessor agencies should have efficient, uniform, and adequate compensation for beryllium-related health conditions and radiation-related health conditions.

(9) On April 12, 2000, the Secretary of Energy announced that the Administration intended to seek compensation for individuals with a broad range of work-related illnesses throughout the Department of Energy’s nuclear weapons complex.

(10) However, as of October 2, 2000, the Administration has failed to provide Congress with the necessary legislative and budget proposals to enact the promised compensation program.

(b) Sense of Congress

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) a program should be established to provide compensation to covered employees;

(2) a fund for payment of such compensation should be established on the books of the Treasury;