



U.S. Office of Special Counsel  
1730 M Street, N.W., Suite 218  
Washington, D.C. 20036-4505

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION CONFIRMS MOLD AND MOISTURE REMEDIATION ATTEMPTS FAILED AT DETROIT METROPOLITAN AIRPORT

---

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CONTACT: Darshan A. Sheth, (202) 254-3617; [dsheth@osc.gov](mailto:dsheth@osc.gov)**

WASHINGTON, DC / January 28, 2010 – Today, the U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) transmitted to the President and Congress the Department of Transportation's (DOT) response to three whistleblowers' allegations that persistent mold and moisture problems in the Detroit Metropolitan Airport (DTW) air traffic control tower and base building have caused health problems. The DOT reports substantiated current and former Air Traffic Control Specialists Vincent Sugent, Elizabeth Dale, and David Parker's allegation that previous remediation attempts costing over one million dollars were unsuccessful.

The mold and moisture problems were first identified in the DTW tower and base building in September 2004 and initial remediation commenced in January 2005. Additional remediation work was performed between 2005 and OSC's 2008 referral to Mary E. Peters, former Secretary of Transportation. Nonetheless, the whistleblowers continued to assert that a significant number of controllers suffered severe health problems due to mold exposure. DOT continued to attempt to abate the moisture and mold problems after the OSC referral and replaced the base building's roof in January 2009. On November 10, 2009, the Federal Aviation Administration acknowledged that the water intrusion problems are caused by structural leaks, condensation, and a leaky roof.

In response to the findings, DOT re-initiated remediation in January 2009 and pledged cooperation and open communication with employees. DOT further pledged to develop and implement an employee health survey to determine the scope of these issues among current and former DTW air traffic controllers, despite the agency's inability to find that the mold and moisture problems were causally related to reported employee health problems. The remediation of the mold and moisture problems, which will require replacing the base building roof a second time, is expected to take up to three more years.

OSC determined that the agency's reports contain all the information required by statute and the findings appear reasonable.

\*\*\*\*

*The U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) is an independent investigative and prosecutorial agency and operates as a secure channel for disclosures of whistleblower complaints. Its primary mission is to safeguard the merit system in federal employment by protecting federal employees and applicants from prohibited personnel practices, especially retaliation for whistleblowing. OSC also has jurisdiction over the Hatch Act. For more information please visit our web site at [www.osc.gov](http://www.osc.gov) or call 1 (800) 872-9855.*