

March 2, 2008

US OFFICE OF SPECIAL COUNSEL
1730 M Street, N.W., Suite 300
Washington D.C. 20036-4505

Comments Regarding: OSC File No. DI-07-1993

When I contacted the Workers Compensation department to let them know I had been pressured into filing a false report, they directed me to file a complaint with the U.S. Office of Special Counsel. I did so, and did not know what to expect. I was pleased that I was taken seriously and treated with respect by both the Office of Special Counsel and the investigators sent out by the Department of the Interior.

I am glad to see that action was taken to provide a safer environment for the USGS employees, and that people will be properly instructed now as to the handling and storing of explosives. I have heard that formal training now occurs and that proper storage is now being arranged.

There are a few problems I can see with the scope of the investigation.

- I was surprised that the railroad companies were not contacted.
- I was also equally surprised that the only people interviewed were current employees of USGS, and specifically those who still work for John Takekawa. I have heard (admittedly second hand) that he met with those employees and prepped them on what he wanted them to say to the investigators. I know he tried to reach me prior to my meeting, but it was on a day I had taken off so I was not able to talk with him. Even if this was not the case, only interviewing those who are still employed by Takekawa is not a full investigation, as those investigated would not want to jeopardize their temporary positions with him. Those who have left may have done so, in part, due to similar frustrations and no longer need to worry about retribution from Takekawa. In particular, I am concerned that the following people, many of whom I personally know wanted to be interviewed, were not:
 - Matt Wilson
 - Lindsay Dembosz
 - Ann Murphy
 - Jennifer MacLean
 - Dominique Monie

Matt Wilson, for example, saw the explosives stored improperly, as recently as February third of this year (sitting in a cardboard box in the middle of the 505 warehouse).

- There are also other employees in other agencies that were not interviewed that witnessed negligence on the part of USGS and it's safety, especially in regards to the rocket nets
 - Sara Stoner-Duncan
 - Terry Addlesbach
 - John Henderson
- I was disappointed that Takekawa's repetitive mishandling of Workers Compensation was not investigated. In a large part I feel this both witnesses to and supports the laxidasical approach he has shown toward his employee's safety.

I also wanted to put on record a few corrections, especially in regards to Takekawa's interview.

- I was not injured in the foot, and Jennifer MacLean did not have a panic attack.
- The explosives were not properly stored in the warehouse, or in a truck parked outside.
- In between projects the explosives were not returned to Dixon, and were still found in boxes or tackle boxes in the warehouse, not marked.
- Takekawa is highly unaware of what happens in the field, and in the three years I was there, I saw him in our south bay station only twice.
- Job Hazard analyses were not in the vehicles, nor did they cover the train crossings or the use of explosives.
- I was never given another option to the Railroad crossing, or told that if I did not want to cross, I did not have to.

To also clarify, neither myself, nor the other whistleblower (of whom I am aware) filed this report because we were disgruntled about a termination of our temporary employment. I filed my original complaint in May of 2007 when I had months of employment left, and if I had not found another job, could have been employed with USGS still. I filed because my concerns over the safety of my crew had grown larger with more incidents that I saw, and Takekawa's neglect to properly care for those under him became incredibly apparent when he asked me to falsify my Workers Compensation form to keep him out of trouble.

I sincerely thank you for the time and efforts of the Office of Special Counsel. Stressful as this has been, it was gratifying to see that something was done and my concerns were not lost in a bureaucratic shuffle.

Thank you,

Angela Rex
~Angela Rex