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PRESS ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Today Dr. Walter Tamosaitis amended his whistleblower complaint against his employer, URS, Inc., which was filed with the Department of Labor in July 2010, to add Bechtel National, Inc. and the Department of Energy as respondents so that they will be included in the investigation currently being conducted by OSHA.

Jack Sheridan, the attorney representing Dr. Tamosaitis, stated, "Based on filings in the parallel civil lawsuit, it appears that URS is claiming that Bechtel and DOE played a role in the decision to terminate Dr. Tamosaitis from his position at Hanford. It is appropriate for OSHA to expand its investigation to include Bechtel and DOE."

Both contractors were hired by the DOE to design and build the Hanford Waste Treatment Plant, which will be an industrial complex of facilities for separating and vitrifying (immobilizing in glass) millions of gallons of high-level nuclear tank waste stored in 177 large underground tanks on the Hanford site. Vitrification technology involves blending the high-level nuclear tank waste with glass-forming materials and heating it to over 2,000 degrees Fahrenheit. The mixture is then poured into stainless steel canisters to cool and solidify. In this glass form, the high-level nuclear tank waste is currently considered stable and impervious to the environment, and its radioactivity will dissipate over hundreds or thousands of years.

Sheridan said, "OSHA should now broaden its investigation to determine whether URS and Bechtel conspired to remove Dr. Tamosaitis from his position at Hanford after he raised safety and technical concerns regarding the Hanford Waste Treatment Plant, and whether their actions were motivated by DOE."

The complaint alleges that he raised concerns that called into question whether Bechtel met a contract milestone that resulted in a multi-million dollar bonus. Within days, Dr. Tamosaitis was removed from his position, escorted off the Hanford property, and is currently assigned to a basement office performing no meaningful work.

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