

May 27, 2010

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman
Labor/HHS Appropriations Subcommittee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

FY2011 – Support for ILAB Funding

Dear Senator Harkin:

The International Safety Equipment Association (ISEA) supports the President's budget recommendation of \$115 million in FY 2011 for the Labor Department's International Labor Affairs Bureau (ILAB), including \$26.5 million to "...address worker rights issues through technical assistance or other programs in countries with which the United States has free trade agreements or trade preference programs." One such technical assistance program is helping our trading partners build capacity for their own occupational safety and health systems.

The United States has 17 free trade agreements, is working on a multi-nation Transpacific Partnership, and trade agreements with Colombia, Panama and South Korea that have been signed but not ratified. The Labor section of each US trade agreement includes "capacity building" provisions that call for training "to improve the level and efficiency of labor law enforcement, strengthen labor inspection systems, and help ensure compliance with labor laws." These provisions also call for mechanisms for supervising compliance with statutes and regulations pertaining to occupational safety and health.

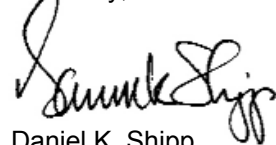
Improving occupational health and safety programs among our trade partners should be a consistent goal of U.S. trade policy. As Labor Secretary Solis told you and your colleagues on the Labor/HHS Appropriations Subcommittee on March 23, "our responsibility to promote acceptable conditions of work abroad is very, very much linked to our worker protection agenda here at home."

US technical assistance for occupational safety and health will help raise the level of working conditions, especially in the developing world. ISEA member companies are part of a global safety equipment industry, supplying equipment and technologies to working men and women around the world. The President's requested funding also has the beneficial impact of helping to expand markets around the world for US companies that export personal protective equipment. In this regard, additional ILAB funding supports US jobs.

ISEA members are companies that design, test, manufacture and supply personal protective equipment including respiratory protection, hard hats, gloves, safety eyewear, personal fall arrest systems, protective apparel, high visibility safety garments, gas detection instruments, and emergency eyewashes and showers. They are united in the goal of protecting the health and safety of people worldwide exposed to hazardous and potentially harmful environments.

Please contact me at 703-525-1695 if I can provide you or your staff with any additional information.

Sincerely,



Daniel K. Shipp
President