Connection

Our Pharmaceutical Dependence on China



China has been a thorn in the side of American steelmakers since the communist nation joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001.

Approximately 50,000 United Steelworker (USW) jobs were eliminated as China and its partners in crime dumped inexpensive, poor-quality steel into the United States market.

But since the President's steel and aluminum tariffs, it is estimated that nearly 7,000 American steelworker jobs have been added to domestic mills.

While this is especially good news for SOAR members who need a well-funded health program and pension fund, China may be hitting retirees in another scary way.

Most SOAR members are baby boomers that unfortunately develop a variety of health problems that require vital medications.

Just as we once assumed that our steel structures were erected with American-made steel, today we assume that our medications are made in America with close monitoring by the Food and Drug Administration.

But the shocking news is that 80 percent of active ingredients in America's pharmaceuticals and over-the-counter drugs are manufactured in China and India, according to Rosemary Gibson and Janardan Prasad Singh, authors of a new book "China RX: Exposing the Risks of America's Dependence on China for Medicine.

Many of the drugs that Americans depend upon, including antibiotics, vitamin C and even cancer drugs are made in China with little regulation.

"The FDA says the drugs are safe. But the outsourcing of America's medicine production is so complex it seems impossible to ensure that they are safe," Gibson and Singh write.

In the last ten years, the FDA has announced recalls of Chinese-made medicines, some of which have even caused death.

If China didn't disrupt your life when you were working in the mill, there is a chance it will cause irreparable damage when you are ill.

Jeff Bonior. Staff Writer for the Alliance for American Manufacturing

PAGE 1

The Plight of Multiemployer Pension Plans



I refer to a portion of an article, "The Multiemployer Pension Crisis" by Aliya Wong, Executive Director of Retirement Policy at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, recently published in *The Hill*, regarding the plight of multiemployer pension plans to help bring this issue to light:

Defined benefit pension plans have long been favored for retirement because they promise a guaranteed level of income. It's a painless way for retirees to enjoy their golden years. That is, unless the plan goes bust.

Unfortunately, that's the condition a number of pension plans are close to being in, particularly so-called "multiemployer" defined benefit plans. It is no exaggeration to say that these plans face a crisis. There is currently a shortfall of more than \$124 billion in these plans. Roughly 1,141 of these plans, covering 1.3 million workers, face more than \$36 billion in shortfalls and are likely to start going bankrupt in as little as five years.

One might think that employers in these plans could simply pay more to shore them up, but the amounts are so large that they could cause many employers to go into bankruptcy; not to mention, the government backstop for these plans – the Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation (PBGC) – is itself predicted to go bust by 2025.

To address this issue, Congress has decided to establish a bipartisan committee tasked with drawing up legislation by the end of the year. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Coordination Committee for Multiemployer Plans (NCCMP) have issued a set of joint principles to aid the committee in its work.

Missing from this group are Labor Unions, whose members are the primary recipients of these benefits.

Without substantive and timely multiemployer plan reform, businesses will go broke, workers will be left without benefits, and taxpayers may face a hefty bill.

To read Ms. Wong's article, in its entirety go to: http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/labor/391953-the-multiemployer-pension-crisis

Bill Pienta, SOAR President

"Often the difference between a successful marriage and a mediocre one consists of leaving about three things a day unsaid."

Author unknown

Los Planes de Pensiones de Aplazamiento de Empleadores Múltiples



Me refiero a una parte de un artículo, "La crisis de pensiones de empleados múltiples", de Aliya Wong, Directora Ejecutiva de la Política de Retiro de la Cámara de Comercio de EE. UU., Recientemente publicada en The Hill, sobre la dificil situación de los planes de pensión de múltiples empleadores para ayudar a llevar este problema a ligero.

Los planes de pensiones de beneficios negado han sido favorecidos durante mucho tiempo para la jubilación porque prometen un nivel garantizado de ingresos. Es una forma indolora para que los jubilados disfruten sus años dorados. Es decir, a menos que el plan fracase.

Desafortunadamente, esa es la condición en la que se encuentran varios planes de pensiones, especialmente los llamados planes de beneficios definidos de "multi - empleadores". No es exagerado decir que estos planes enfrentan una crisis. Actualmente hay un déficit de más de \$124 mil millones en estos planes. Aproximadamente 1.141 de estos planes, que cubren 1.3 millones de trabajadores, enfrentan una escasez de \$36 mil millones y es probable que comiencen a declararse en quiebra en tan solo cinco años.

Uno podrá pensar que los empleadores en estos planes simplemente podrían pagar mas para apuntalarlos, pero las cantidades son tan grandes que podrían

Hacer que muchos empleadores se declaren en quiebra, sin mencionar que el gobierno respalda estos planes – Se prevé que la Corporación de Garantiza de Beneficios de Pensiones (PBGC, por sus siglas en inglés) regirá en el año 2025.

Para abordar este problema, el congreso decidió establecer un comité bipartidista encargado de elaborar la legislación antes de fin de año. La Cámara de Comercio de EE. UU. Y el Comité Nacional de Coordinación Planes de Empleadores Múltiples (NCCMP) han emitido un conjunto de principios conjuntos para ayudar al comité en su trabajo.

Faltan de este grupo los Sindicatos, cuyos miembros son los destinatarios principales de estos beneficios

Sin una reforma sustancial y oportuna del plan de multiempresa ríales, las empresas se irán a la quiebra, los trabajadores se quedarán sin beneficios, y los contribuyentes pueden enfrentar una factura considerable.

Para leer el articulo de la Sra. Wong, en su totalidad vaya a: http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/labor/391953-the-multiemployer-pension-crises

Bill Pienta, Presidente de SOAR



Retiring to Our Passions



Just one day before finalizing this edition of SOAR Chapter Connection, I came across an article that, in its title, perfectly summarized what I wanted to write about in this column. The article – titled "Don't call it retirement. Call it 'transitioning to a new chapter'" – discussed how changing the way we think about our "post-work" years can have a direct impact on our physical and mental wellbeing.

As suggested in the article, we should think about our "post-work" years not as retirement, but as a transition where we can "retire to our passions rather than just from our previous jobs or careers."

In addition to being an opportunity for USW members to continue our involvement in our great union, SOAR is a chance for each of us to improve our mental and physical health through community service, engaging with others, and educating our friends and families about issues that are important to us as retirees.

On a number of occasions, we've highlighted the "Protect Retirement Security" postcard campaign, which has been the focus of SOAR and Rapid Response activists; resulting to date in the delivery of more than 20,000 postcards to legislators urging them to protect retiree security. Additionally, SOAR activists traveled to Columbus, Ohio, on July 12, to urge Congressional action to protect millions of active and retired workers covered by multiemployer pensions facing insolvency over the next ten years.

We know that our SOAR chapters will be actively involved in planning and coordinating activities over Labor Day weekend; I implore you all to contact your USW district office to get plugged into our union's political program and election activities. Or, reach out to your state's AFL CIO or Alliance for Retired Americans to get involved in voter registration drives and voter outreach in support of union-endorsed candidates this fall. For more information, visit www.retiredamericans.org

These activities, and more are ways SOAR members are "transitioning to a new chapter" by following our passions to stay connected to the union - as we continue the fight to protect and enhance the quality of life of retirees and working families.

Julie Stein, SOAR Director

Pleonasm is the use of more words or parts of words than are necessary or sufficient for clear expression.

Source: Wikipedia



July 24, 2018

USW Argues for Transparency in Section 232 Exclusion Process, Urges Focus on Domestic Steel and Aluminum Production

(PITTSBURGH) -- The United Steelworkers (USW) union released the following statement today after the House Ways and Means Trade Subcommittee hearing "Product Exclusion Process for Section 232 Tariffs on Steel and Aluminum." Roy Houseman, a representative from the USW, testified at the hearing. To read his full testimony, go to http://usw.to/209 or click here.

"The steel and aluminum Section 232 tariffs are necessary to ensure that the United States can supply our defense and critical infrastructure needs.

"So far, these measures are working as intended. They are providing our domestic industries with needed relief, allowing U.S. companies to expand production and create thousands of jobs.

"However, if the domestic steel and aluminum industries are going to remain viable, it is critical that the Department of Commerce have a clear, focused process in considering exclusions to the Section 232 tariffs.

"Exclusions should be limited in time and scope, and Commerce should be diligent in uncovering inaccurate or misleading requests. The exclusion process should also allow for public comment.

"Tariffs alone cannot be the solution to illegal dumping and global excess capacity. However, until we can devise a comprehensive plan to address these problems, we must not undermine the benefits that these tariffs are already providing.

"Rather than granting unnecessary exclusions, the government should encourage domestic production so that the United States truly can meet its own needs in these vital sectors."

"Success is not final, failure is not fatal. It is the courage to continue that counts."

- Winston Churchill

Keeping up the Efforts to Protect Retirement Security



Retirement security remains a key focus of Rapid Response this year. The work began with a joint SOAR-Rapid Response action that ultimately generated over 20,000 postcards destined for U.S. Senators and Representatives. It continued at the 2018 Rapid Response and Legislative Conference in May, where retirement topics were featured. When hundreds of active and retired members descended upon Capitol Hill for meetings with lawmakers during that conference, we raised the issue and delivered the postcards.

Now, the effort continues with a push to protect the hard-earned benefits of our members in two financially troubled multiemployer pension plans*, the PACE Industry Union-Management Pension Fund (PIUMPF) and the National Integrated Group Pension Plan (NIGPP).



Our union has always played a key role in safeguarding retirement security. For example, the Steelworkers were central to the enactment of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974. That law created a government-run, privately-funded, insurance program to protect pension benefits called the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC). When a crisis unfolded in the steel industry resulting in closure after closure, it was this law that ensured the pensions of impacted Steelworkers didn't disappear. Prior to the law, there was no protection for workers.

Today, we have a new challenge. For some multiemployer pension plans, we've seen a perfect storm of hardships that's pushed them from secure financial footing into distress. Plant closures from bad trade policy, a massive loss of assets due to the financial crisis of the Great Recession, and other factors have left PIUMPF and NIGPP in a troubled financial situation, putting the benefits of current and future retirees at risk without government action. This is an issue impacting many workers outside of our union as well. In total, a million people could see their pensions in jeopardy. The magnitude of the problem is putting the future solvency of a portion of the PBGC that deals with multiemployer plans into jeopardy.

Many of the circumstances that landed the plans in their current state had to do with government decisions and unforeseeable changes in industry. Government decisions also determine how these plans can operate. That's why our union is actively involved once again in working with Congress to find solutions.

There is a bipartisan committee made up of Senators and Representatives who are tasked with developing recommendations and legislative language designed to significantly improve the solvency of multiemployer pension plans and the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation. They have until November 30, 2018. We've launched a campaign to encourage action and ensure that pensions are protected.

Get Involved! If all or a part of your pension is in PIUMPF or NIGPP, please reach out to Rapid Response, either in your District or by calling 412-562-2291. We're currently holding meetings and asking impacted members to write letters to key Senators and Representatives, along with other actions. Not in either of those plans? We have other ways to act in solidarity.

The more retirees who speak out, the better our chances for a productive solution to all of our retirement security concerns, whether that's regarding Social Security, Medicare, or our current fight over multiemployer pensions. We've worked too hard for our retirement. Let's make sure it's there for all of us.

*Multiemployer pension plans are created by collective bargaining agreements between at least one labor union and two or more employers, often in the same industry.

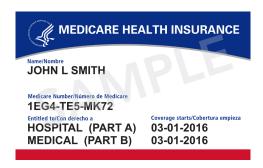


Your New Medicare Card Is On Its Way

If you live in Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, or Wisconsin — keep an eye on your mailbox — your new Medicare card is on its way!

Mailing cards takes at least a month in each state or territory, so you might get your new Medicare card at a different time than friends or neighbors in your area. You can still use your old Medicare card until your new card arrives.

Haven't received your new card yet? It's ok--we're still mailing. Log in to your MyMedicare.gov account to see when your new card has hit the mail. If you don't have a MyMedicare.gov account, you can sign up in just a few easy clicks.



Your new Medicare card has a new look and a new unique Medicare Number, instead of a Social Security Number, to better protect your personal identity. Your Medicare coverage and benefits will stay exactly the same.

Note: If you've already received your new card, that's great! Destroy the old card and start using the new one right away.

Source: Medicare.gov

The Seven Social Sins

This is a list that was first uttered in a sermon delivered in Westminster Abbey on March 20, 1925, by an Anglican priest named Frederick Lewis Donaldson. He originally referred to it as the "Deadly Social Evils."

- 1. Wealth without work.
- 2. Pleasure without conscience.
- 3. Knowledge without character.
- 4. Commerce without morality.
- 5. Science without humanity.
- 6. Religion without sacrifice.
- 7. Politics without principle.

We Owe it to Them



I have written before about the impact that court appointees can and will have on all of us and our children and grandchildren. A decision by the Supreme Court that was recently handed down in a case referred to as "Janus" by a 5 to 4 decision, illustrates this. The President's recent appointee made the difference that upended a decade of precedent regarding public employees paying a "fair share" to their unions.

It is clear that this decision is anti-union and anti-worker and is intended to reduce funding to the union. These employees will receive all the benefits that

the Union negotiates and are protected by the terms of the collective bargaining but don't have to pay their fair share -"freeloaders."

Isn't it ironic that the same people who oppose individuals receiving something for nothing, are okay with individuals getting the benefits of unions and collective bargaining without having to pay to support getting those benefits? Further, they rationalize in the decision that it has something to do with "free speech" and the First Amendment. Think about that. Such logic could be argued that I shouldn't have to pay taxes passed by politicians I disagree with. How absurd.

But, we know the real reason is to undermine unions and worker rights. We are already dealing with the adversity of right-to-work laws.

This is just a further example of the number of adverse issues that the current political situation is creating and why we must stand up and fight back. And we must protect retirement benefits, Medicare and Social Security.

I am impressed with what Rapid Response, Next Generation and SOAR are doing to stand up and fight back. Please get involved; these organizations give us the structure to be active and organized to confront these anti-union, anti-worker attacks. We owe it to our children and grandchildren.

Bill Gibbons, PACE Representative

"You cannot reason with a tiger when your head is in its mouth."

-Winston Churchill

SOAR Chapter Connection

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I can't remember where I saw this but thought it was worth passing on.

Practice the "Pause Attitude"

when in doubt, pause; when angry, pause; when tired, pause; when stressed, pause; and when you pause, PRAY.

The McNeil Report

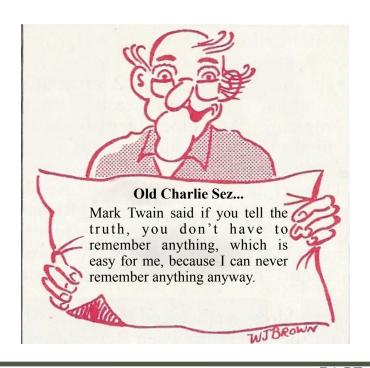
As I was searching for a funny joke to insert into the McNeil Report, I thought, gosh, after I listen to or hear a joke, although I may laugh and think it's funny I don't remember it very long. But really, the funniest stuff is what happens to some of us in real life. Like what happened to me a while back.

When Elaine was out of town on vacation, I thought I'd better wash dishes. She has one of those front loading washing machines.

I made sure the thing was full and then grabbed some dish soap from beneath the sink and started it up. I began to watch the evening news and about a half hour later, I went to the kitchen to get myself a cup of coffee. I'm telling you soap suds were exiting the machine out the front and were traveling across the floor and rolling down the basement steps.

I quickly shut the machine off and with a dustpan scooped up three garbage cans full of suds. I knew better because I remember doing the same thing several years ago. It did a great job of cleaning the kitchen floor and the basement steps.

Don't forget to email chapter and district articles and photos to the address on the left. Photos should be the highest resolution possible.





What are the Social Security Trust Funds?

The Social Security Trust Funds include:

- The Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund; and
- The Disability Insurance Trust Fund.

The Department of the Treasury manages these funds. The law requires us to invest trust fund assets we don't need to pay current benefits and administrative expenses. We invest them in interest-bearing obligations of the United States. These special obligations, issued exclusively to the Trust Funds, must pay interest equal to the prevailing rate on outstanding federal securities.

Source: Social Security Administration Website

Disability Insurance Trust Fund

The Disability Insurance Trust Fund is a separate account in the United States Treasury. A fixed proportion (dependent on the allocation of tax rates by trust fund) of the taxes received under the Federal Insurance Contributions Act and the Self-Employment Contributions Act are deposited in the fund to the extent that such taxes are not needed immediately to pay expenses. Taxes are deposited in the fund on every business day.

The trust fund provides automatic spending authority to pay monthly benefits to disabled-worker beneficiaries and their spouses and children. With such spending authority, the Social Security Administration does not need to periodically request money from the Congress to pay benefits.

Funds not withdrawn for current expenses (benefits, the financial interchange with the Railroad Retirement program, and administrative expenses) are invested in interest-bearing Federal securities, as required by law; the interest earned is also deposited in the trust fund.

The Disability Insurance (DI) Trust Fund was created with the passage of the Social Security Act Amendments of 1956. DI became effective on January 1, 1957.

The Board of Trustees currently consists of six members, four of whom automatically serve by virtue of their positions in the Federal Government. These four are:

- Secretary of the Treasury (the Managing Trustee)
- Secretary of Labor
- Secretary of Health and Human Services
- Commissioner of Social Security

The other two members are appointed by the President, and confirmed by the Senate, as required by the "Social Security Amendments of 1983." These two members serve 4-year terms.

Source: Social Security Administration



Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund

The Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund is a separate account in the United States Treasury. A fixed proportion (dependent on the allocation of tax rates by trust fund) of the taxes received under the Federal Insurance Contributions Act and the Self-Employment Contributions Act are deposited in the fund to the extent that such taxes are not needed immediately to pay expenses. Taxes are deposited in the fund on every business day.

The trust fund provides automatic spending authority to pay monthly benefits to retired-worker (old-age) beneficiaries and their spouses and children and to survivors of deceased insured workers. With such spending authority, the Social Security Administration does not need to periodically request money from the Congress to pay benefits.

Funds not withdrawn for current expenses (benefits, the financial interchange with the Railroad Retirement program, and administrative expenses) are invested in interest-bearing Federal securities, as required by law; the interest earned is also deposited in the trust fund.

The Old-Age and Survivors Insurance (OASI) Trust Fund was created pursuant to section 201 of the Social Security Act Amendments of 1939. These amendments also established a Board of Trustees. OASI became effective on January 1, 1940, and superseded the old-age reserve account established under the Social Security Act of 1935.

The Board of Trustees currently consists of six members, four of whom automatically serve by virtue of their positions in the Federal Government. These four are:

- Secretary of the Treasury (the Managing Trustee)
- Secretary of Labor
- Secretary of Health and Human Services
- Commissioner of Social Security

The other two members are appointed by the President, and confirmed by the Senate, as required by the "Social Security Amendments of 1983." These two members serve 4-year terms.

Source: Social Security Administration

State Health Insurance Assistance Programs (SHIPs)

SHIPs offer local, personalized counseling and assistance to people with Medicare and their families. SHIPs can help you with things like:

- Your Medicare questions, including your benefits, coverage, premiums, deductibles, and coinsurance
- Complaints and appeals
- Joining or leaving a Medicare Advantage Plan (like an HMO or PPO), any other Medicare health plan, or Medicare Prescription Drug Plan (Part D)

You will find the phone number on the back cover of the Medicare&You Handbook 2018. Source: medicare.gov

On the Lighter Side



When I was a teenager, my Dad would cut the hair for me and my two brothers. He used those old fashioned looking barber tools and would, it seem, and pick the hottest, stickiest time of the day to cut mine. Every once in a while, while cutting, he would say, "Oops, I'll be right back." Well, you can guess what the problem was. Right.....he nicked my ear and the blood would drip.

After getting discharged from the U.S. Navy, I married my high-school sweetheart. While I was stationed on a ship home-ported in Pearl Harbor, Elaine

was going to school to learn to be a hairdresser. Right away she started to get in the rhythm of cutting my hair. She even gave me straight razor shaves for a few years.

Now, after cutting my hair for 52 years, she told me that she was through and I'd have to start going to a barber. When I asked her why, she said I'm starting to get Andy Rooney eyebrows and she was afraid of poking me in the eye. I guess it was the truth because every once in a while one of those eyebrow hairs would keep sticking me in the eye and Elaine would have to get the scissors out to cut the thing because I wear glasses and couldn't see it. I talked her into cutting it two or three more times when she finally said absolutely not. No more. Go to a barber.

Well, I didn't know where any barber was but when in our little town of Knox, Indiana, I saw one of those hairdressing places. It was open and only one lady was in there with no customers. I opened the door and yelled to her, "Can you cut a man's hair?" She said, "sure." I said, "How much?" She answered, "Are you a veteran?" Yes, I replied. She said "seven bucks." I asked, "Can you do it right now? She said "yes." So, I got a haircut for seven bucks plus a three dollar tip. Not bad compared to what some other guys are paying.

Well, when I got home, I didn't say anything to Elaine but when she noticed, she said, "where did you go for that haircut? I told her of the experience and she said, "I don't want you going there anymore, you find a barber." I'm thinking maybe the lady got a little too close when cutting the back and maybe left a little foo foo juice odor on my shirt. Who knows?

Well, the next time I needed a haircut and after a lot of searching, found a barber. I had to wait a half hour while he snip-snipped a guy. Then, another half hour while he snip-snipped my head, and all for a U.S. Navy-style crew cut.

I haven't been to a barber since but the back neckline is starting to get a little shabby looking so, I've been asking a few guys if they ever have cut their own hair. Although they say they do and telling me how easy it is, I'm a little hesitant. I've asked Elaine if she would teach me how but she refuses.

Someone said they're giving out an award for the shortest article so, I better quit now.

Charlie Averill





July 24, 2018

Action Update: Deadline Extended to August 15

Please continue to sign and circulate the petition to keep much-needed regulations intact.

The federal government just pushed back the cut-off date for comments on the Chemical Disaster Rule, giving us a few more weeks to get critically needed petition signatures to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Why Act? In a recent 10-year span, there were 2,200 chemical incidents in the U.S. Fifty-nine people were killed and over 17,000 injured. Tens of thousands of USW members work in facilities like these that use or store dangerous chemicals and are densely located across the country. We need to be doing everything we can to make our workplaces and communities safer, NOT gutting commonsense regulations like the Chemical Disaster Rule. We have a responsibility to weigh in on the devastating consequences of proposed rollbacks to this rule.

Please make sure the EPA is hearing from the people that have the most at state-us!

PROTECT OUR WORKPLACES AND COMMUNITIES

Here's what you can do to help:

- Print out the petition on page fifteen. Circulate copies in your workplace and have members sign.
- Please return completed petitions including the cover sheet to your District Rapid Response Coordinator or get them to our national office by one of the following methods by August fifteen. (Please note the new date. Petitions must be received by this date in order to meet the federal deadline).

Scan & Email: uswrr@usw.org

Fax: 412-562-2266

Mail: USW Rapid Response, 60 Blvd. of the Allies, Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Thank you to the chapters who have already sent in petitions. For those chapters who have not, or those that want to make a second round to be sure everyone has had the opportunity to engage in this important action, please do so.

PROTECT OUR WORKPLACES AND COMMUNITIES

Please include this sheet when returning petitions so we know where they came from.

ATTN: USW Rapid Response

Local:	
Total Petition Pages:	
Date:	

Petitions can be returned to your
District Rapid Response Coordinator
OR
to our national office by one of the following methods:
Scan & Email: uswrr@usw.org
Fax: 412-562-2266
Mail: USW Rapid Response
60 Blvd. of the Allies
Pittsburgh, PA 15222



PROTECT OUR WORKPLACES AND COMMUNITIES

EPA Administrator,

A chemical release, explosion, or fire occurs every 2.5 days in this country, often at USW facilities across the steel, aluminum, paper, rubber, chemical, refining, and other industries. However, you and the Administration are seeking to repeal common sense regulations that require some industrial facilities to prevent and plan a response should a catastrophic chemical incident occur. Your proposal rescinds accident prevention requirements (like root cause investigation of accidents) and scales back requirements for facilities to coordinate with local emergency responders before an accident. As USW members who work in these facilities and live in surrounding communities, we call on you to withdraw this harmful and reckless proposal.

Signature	Name (print)	Street Address	City, State, Zip