



U.S. OFFICE OF SPECIAL COUNSEL

1730 M Street, N.W., Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20036-4505

www.osc.gov

October 18, 2007

The Special Counsel

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Re: OSC File No. DI-06-1731

Dear Mr. President:

I received disclosures from Ms. Krista Haddon, an Occupational Health and Safety Specialist, alleging that it is impossible to hear the fire alarm in the classrooms at the United States Department of the Navy (Navy), Occupational Health, Safety and Environmental Training Center (Training Center), Naval Air Depot North Island, San Diego, California. Ms. Haddon, who consented to the release of her name, alleged that the inability to hear a fire alarm constitutes a substantial and specific danger to public safety.

I required the Honorable Donald C. Winter, Secretary of the Navy, to conduct an investigation into the whistleblower's disclosures pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 1213(c) and (d). The Secretary submitted a comprehensive agency report completed by the Office of the Naval Inspector General (OIG). As required by law, 5 U.S.C. § 1213(e)(3), I am now transmitting the report to you.

The agency investigation substantiated Ms. Haddon's allegations and reflected that the agency took corrective action to address the public safety issues created by an inaudible fire alarm system. Specifically, the agency found that Navy management personnel failed to implement adequate interim control measures pending fire alarm repairs; that management personnel failed to repair an inaudible fire alarm system as required by regulations; that the four year lapse to effect repairs was unreasonable; and that management personnel failed to document the interim controls and to plan to abate the hazard properly as required by the Navy's Program Manual.

The report stated that the Training Center fire alarm system was not repaired until the commencement of the agency investigation. Although there is no specific time limit requirement to correct deficiencies in a fire alarm system, the agency concluded that "[f]our years is simply too long to wait before taking effective corrective action to get the alarms working again." The agency further stated that although it may be reasonable to delay upgrading an existing system for several years in order to do a coordinated base-wide upgrade, provided that system continues to operate as designed, it is unreasonable to use future projects to justify leaving a fire safety deficiency uncorrected for four years. In addition, OIG agreed with Navy subject-matter experts that the repair or replacement should have been funded and performed within six months of discovery.

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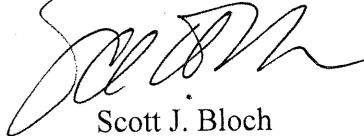
As stated above, the agency's corrective action reflected that the Training Center's fire alarm system was tested and repaired, and thus, the fire alarm is now audible to people in the classrooms. Further, on June 28, 2007, a government contract in the amount of \$7.4 million was awarded as part of an effort to upgrade the Training Center fire alarm system and an agency working group team was established to review fire equipment and safety regulations.

Ms. Haddon declined to submit formal comments, but expressed satisfaction that the agency had responded with corrective action to address her public safety concerns and expressed gratitude that federal employees responded promptly and professionally.

I have reviewed the original disclosures and the agency report. Based on that review, I have determined that the agency's report contains all of the information required by statute, and that its findings appear to be reasonable.

As required by § 1213(e)(3), I have sent a copy of the report to the Chairmen of the Senate and House Committees on the Armed Forces. I have also filed a copy of the agency report in our public file and closed the matter.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Bloch", written over a horizontal line.

Scott J. Bloch

Enclosure