

BCTGM *News*

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Workers Memorial Day **April 28, 2008**

A lit candle in front of an American flag. The candle is lit, with a bright flame and a warm glow. The American flag is draped in the background, with its stars and stripes clearly visible. The overall scene is a symbol of remembrance and solidarity.

Good Jobs. Safe Jobs. For All.



the PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

WATCHDOGS GONE A.W.O.L.

Of the many disastrous legacies of the Bush Administration, one of the most far reaching may be the utter failure of federal agencies across government to do their jobs and protect the health

and well-being of our citizens.

Understaffed and under funded federal inspection agencies have allowed contaminated food (for humans and pets) and toxic children's toys from China to flood our market.

A cozy relationship between the airlines and government inspectors left the flying public at grave risk when a Federal Aviation Administration (F.A.A.) supervisor allowed 46 unsafe Southwest Airlines planes to fly nearly 60,000 flights when those planes should have been grounded. And how many more such situations have occurred without the public's knowledge?

The nation faces its worst housing and financial institution crisis since the Great Depression because Wall Street big shots and corrupt bankers and mortgage company executives found a way to get out from under federal regulations designed 75 years ago to protect average citizens.

Rather than work urgently to update the regulatory process and make it more effective in overseeing today's financial institutions, the Bush Administration instead rushes to bail out the millionaires and billionaires whose greed created the crisis in the first place while at the same time opposes congressional efforts to help working people hang on to their homes.

But nowhere has this Administration's regulatory failure been more shameful and come with greater human consequences than in the area of workplace safety and health. For the past seven years, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has been at best, horribly incompetent and at worst, a willing participant in the severe erosion of protections for Americans in workplaces across the industrial spectrum.

From the beginning, the Bush Administration, by word and deed, made it clear that it had no interest in seeing that OSHA was an effective agency, living up to its mission to ensure the safety and health of America's working men and women on the job.

Since taking office, the Administration has cut funding for OSHA by \$25 million and reduced enforcement staff by nearly 150. At its current staffing and inspection levels, it would take OSHA 133 years to inspect each workplace under its jurisdiction just one time.

Despite major advances in technical capabilities and decades of research, analysis and experience to draw upon, horrific workplace accidents—mine cave-ins, grain, sugar and oil refinery explosions, industrial fires and chemical exposures—still occur on a far too regular basis.

Instead of a commitment to enforcing the standards and regulations on the books, the political appointees running OSHA have sided with their friends and former colleagues in the employer community who want less regulation and a totally free hand to run their companies with little regard to the safety and health of their employees.

But, should we expect anything different from an agency that is led by a Bush appointee who spent the better part of his career as a partner and OSHA specialist at Jackson Lewis, LLP, which the AFL-CIO describes as "one of the nation's most notorious union-busting law firms."

The truest test of any Administration's commitment to fulfilling an agency's mission is the budget it allocates for and the people it appoints to run that agency. In the case of OSHA, the Bush Administration has failed this test and failed it tragically.

We must keep this test clearly in mind as we assess the individuals running to

lead the next presidential administration.

Our government can and must do better by America's working men and women. It begins with political leaders who believe in the laws they have sworn to enforce and whose paramount interest is the well-being of our citizens.

Frank Hurt

BCTGM International President

"I see such an incredible lack of urgency on the part of your agency to protect workers that it is astounding."

—U.S. Representative George Miller (D-CA), Chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee to Edwin Foulke, Jr., at a March 12, 2008 congressional hearing.

"I send condolence letters on every fatality we handle. I sign every one of them."

—Edwin Foulke, Jr., March 12, 2008
Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health





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BCTGM Reaches Agreement on Master Contract with Nabisco

After nine days of negotiations in San Antonio, Texas, BCTGM negotiators representing approximately 3,000 workers in seven plants across the United States reached a four year agreement with Nabisco.

Nabisco, a subsidiary of food giant Kraft Foods, produces some of the world's most iconic cookie and cracker brands, including *Oreo*, *Saltines*, *Triscuit*, *Chips Ahoy* and *Fig Newtons*.



The new contract includes annual wage increases of \$0.35, \$0.50, \$0.50, \$0.60 through 2012, and pension increases of \$50.00 per year of the agreement resulting in a pension level of \$1,850.00 by 2012. Other gains include: improvements in funeral leave coverage; an increase in accident and sickness benefits; and maintenance of health benefits.

According to chief negotiator, International Vice President Bob Oakley, the union's negotiators communicated closely with workers in the plants. "Our membership was very involved in setting the priorities for these negotiations and that is certainly reflected in the contract we achieved," said Oakley.

The BCTGM's negotiating committee was made up of representatives from each of the seven Nabisco plants including: L. 26 (Denver) President Mary Snyder; L. 42 (Atlanta) Business Manager Johnny Jackson; L. 300



(Chicago) President Edward Burpo; L. 358 (Richmond) Business Agent Ted Constable; L. 364 (Portland, Ore.) Financial Secretary Victor Weekes; L. 492 (Fair Lawn, N.J.) President Edward Rodgers; and L. 719 (Philadelphia) Financial Secretary-Treasurer Business Agent Al Ahtau. The negotiations were led by Oakley and International Representative James Condran.



BCTGM representatives from local unions in Denver, Atlanta, Chicago, Portland, Ore., Philadelphia, and Fair Lawn, N.J., prepare for negotiations with Kraft Foods in San Antonio.

BCTGM and International Labor Calls for *Regulation of Nanotechnology*

Nanotechnology is defined as the field of applied science and technology whose unifying theme is the control of matter on the atomic and molecular scale, generally 100 nanometers or smaller, and the fabrication of devices with critical dimensions that lie within that size range. And the increased use of nanotechnology has provoked concern amongst labor unions, public health officials, the scientific community, and environmental organizations. According to Friends of the Earth, “In one of the most dramatic failures of regulation since the introduction of asbestos, corporations around the world are rapidly introducing thousands of tons of nanomaterials into the environment...despite the growing body of evidence indicating that nanomaterials can be toxic to humans and to the environment.”

Indeed, it is estimated that there are close to 1,000 commercial products that contain nanomaterials, including skin care creams, sunscreen, food packaging, food additives, agricultural fertilizers, paints, disinfectants, teas, dental-binding agents, glare-reducing coatings, and stadium lights. There is growing scientific evidence that indicate that nanoparticles, because they are so small, can cross into the body's cells and cause damage.

An international coalition, including the BCTGM, the AFL-CIO, the International Union of Food Workers (IUF), and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), has launched a call for strong, comprehensive regulatory oversight at all levels of nanotechnology and its products.

Of particular concern to the BCTGM is the impact nanomaterials may have on manufacturing workers. According to BCTGM International President Frank Hurt, there is no way to measure the presence of nanoparticles in the workplace or to test workers for exposure. “Because of this uncertainty it seems wise that we should be cautious in how we approach nanotechnology, especially in the food and beverage industries,” said Hurt.

The greatest immediate potential for commercial nanotechnology in the food sector is in food packaging, using nanoproducts designed to promote shelf life, inhibit oxygen, carbon dioxide and moisture exposure, detect pathogens, or track products throughout the distribution cycle.

IUF General Secretary Ron Oswald, commenting on the release of the *Principles for the Oversight of Nanotechnologies and Nanomaterials*, highlighted the importance of defending against the massive intrusion of nanoproducts into the global food chain.

“Workers, consumers, and the environment must be adequately protected against the multiple risks this development poses to the global food system and the women and men who produce the food we all depend on,” says Oswald.

Examples for Nanofood Applications

Food Processing	Food Packaging
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nanocapsules to improve bioavailability of nutraceuticals in standard ingredients such as cooking oils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Antibodies attached to fluorescent nanoparticles to detect chemicals or foodborne pathogens
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nanoencapsulated flavor enhancers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biodegradable nanosensors for temperature, moisture and time monitoring
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nanotubes and nanoparticles as gelation and viscosifying agents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nanoclays and nanofilms as barrier materials to prevent spoilage and prevent oxygen absorption
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nanocapsule infusion of plant-based steroids to replace a meat's cholesterol 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electrochemical nanosensors to detect ethylene
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nanoparticles to selectively bind and remove chemicals or pathogens from food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Antimicrobial and antifungal surface coatings with nanoparticles (silver, magnesium, zinc)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nanoemulsions and particles for better availability and dispersion of nutrients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lighter, stronger and more heat-resistant films with silicate nanoparticles
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modified permeation behavior of foils

AN OPEN LETTER TO RETIREES



From George J. Kourpias
President, Alliance for Retired Americans

I often find myself wondering, "Who does our government really work for?" I felt this way when I heard that the Bush administration wants to cut \$178 billion from Medicare. This targets the most vulnerable—seniors who need Medicare to afford to see a doctor—in favor of sustaining the record profits enjoyed by big drug and insurance companies. Only in Washington could this be the work of a "compassionate conservative."

The Bush administration continues to stand by its subsidies to large insurance companies—estimated to be \$150 billion over the next ten years—to operate privatized Medicare Advantage plans, at a cost between 12 and 19 percent higher than if Medicare directly served these same people. And on top of this, the White House says it would veto a bill in Congress to end the ban on Medicare negotiating bulk discounts from drug manufacturers.

The pharmaceutical industry's main trade group spent over \$22 million on Washington lobbyists in 2007, a 25 percent increase over 2006. At the same time, prescription prices rose eight percent, twice the rate of inflation. The newspaper article I read said the increases were aimed at driving drug prices higher before Congress could pass any Medicare reforms.

What all of these stories have in common is how terribly important 2008 is for us. As these issues are debated throughout the year, we must pay close attention. We must know the issues, and know where the candidates stand.

Our generation's working days may be over, but our fighting spirit remains as strong as ever. We face great challenges as we try to reform health care and retirement security, but I believe this is a fight we can—and must—win.

New Report Highlights OSHA's Shrinking Budget

A new report by OMB Watch, a non-profit, research and advocacy group, highlights how the resource-starved Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is suffering under a lengthy period of under funding and under enforcement. The report, *Bankrupting Government: How a Decades-Long Campaign against Federal Spending Has Undermined Public Protections*, is the first in a series.

Like many other federal agencies, including the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Labor Relations Board, and Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), OSHA already faces budget constraints that make it more difficult for it to perform its most basic mission: to protect working men and women on the job. Over the past three decades, beginning with the Reagan Administration, OSHA's budget, staffing levels, and inspection activity have dropped while the American workforce has grown dramatically and new hazards have emerged.

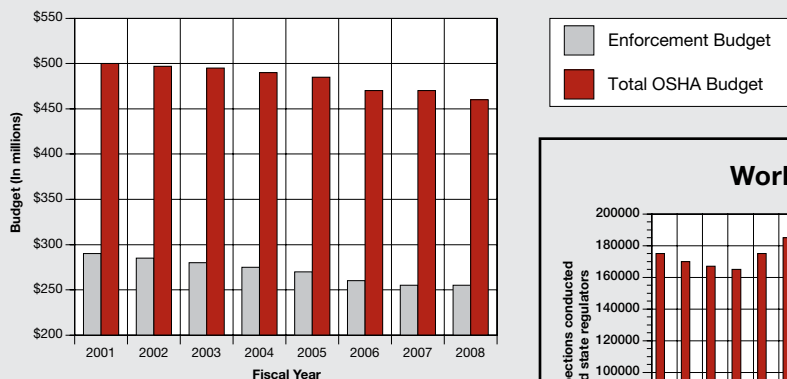
According to the report, as OSHA's budget decreased, so too did its staffing levels. In 1980,

OSHA's staffing level hit its peak—2,950. In 2006, OSHA had a staff of only 2,092, the second-lowest level in 30 years. In 1980, OSHA had approximately three staff members for every 100,000 American workers. In 2006, staffing levels had been cut in half for every 100,000 American workers—to only 1.5 staff members.

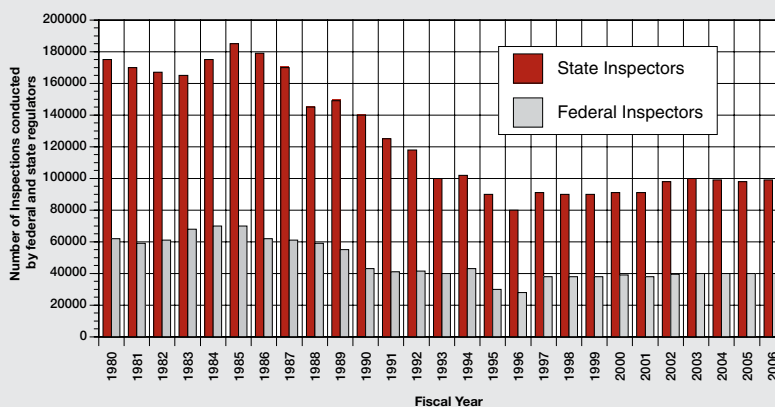
It is important to note that the bulk of OSHA's work is in enforcement. The federal budget for federal and state enforcement activity has declined more sharply over time than the overall OSHA budget. Subsequently, the number of workplace inspections conducted by both OSHA and state agencies has fallen dramatically. According to OMB Watch, OSHA's budget for enforcement activity is currently 12 percent lower than it was in 1980.

According to Peg Seminario, director of safety and health for the AFL-CIO, "Under the Bush Administration, voluntary efforts and partnerships with employers have been favored over mandatory standards and industry-wide enforcement initiatives. With this approach, OSHA has abandoned its leadership role in safety and health, choosing to work with individual employers, rather than taking bold action to bring about broad and meaningful change in working conditions on an industry-wide and national level."

OSHA Budget, Overall and Enforcement Activity, 2001-2008



Workplace Inspections, 1980-2006



Trends in OSHA's budget and workplace regulation:

- OSHA's budget has been cut each year President Bush has been in office (when adjusted for inflation).
- OSHA staffing levels have not kept pace with the growth in the American workforce.
- Government agencies conduct fewer than half the number of workplace inspections conducted 30 years ago.
- After three decades of significant progress, declines in workplace fatality rates have stagnated in recent years.

BCTGM Petitions OSHA for Emergency Standard to **End Dust Explosions**

Following the February 7 explosion at the Imperial Sugar plant in Port Wentworth, Georgia that killed 12 people, the BCTGM, along with several other unions, petitioned OSHA to set combustible dust standards. Combustible dust standards were put in effect for the grain industry after a series of explosions in the 1970s and 1980s, but OSHA failed to act on a 2006 recommendation by the U.S. Chemical Safety Board (CSB) that similar standards be set up for other industries.

The CSB undertook the extensive study of dust explosions in general industry following three catastrophic dust explosions that killed 14 workers in 2003. The CSB study identified 281 combustible dust incidents that occurred between 1980 and 2005. There were 119 workers killed and 718 injured. Industrial facilities were extensively damaged and surrounding communities significantly impacted.

According to BCTGM International President Frank Hurt, it is inexcusable that OSHA would ignore the CSB report that called for a federal standard for general industry that would address hazard assessment, engineering controls, housekeeping, and

worker training. “Unfortunately, this is the way the Administration does business; rather than listen to the experts or the scientific community, it waits until tragedy strikes,” notes Hurt.

The petition to OSHA would force the agency to “immediately issue an OSHA Emergency

Temporary Standard (ETS) for combustible dust in general industry. Workers who are employed in facilities where uncontrolled combustible dust emissions are present face ‘grave danger’ of experiencing fatalities or serious injuries as a result of dust explosions and resultant fires.”

Legislation Introduced to Prevent Dust Explosions

U.S. Reps. George Miller (D-CA) and John Barrow (D-GA) announced legislation to help prevent combustible dust explosions like the one at the Imperial Sugar refinery in Port Wentworth, Georgia, in early February that killed 12 workers and critically injured 11 others.

The Miller-Barrow legislation would force the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration to issue rules regulating combustible industrial dusts, like sugar dust, that can build up to hazardous levels and explode. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) already has the authority to issue such a rule without Congress passing new legislation, but the agency has failed to act despite the fact that the dangers of combustible dust have been well known for years.

“The tragedy at Imperial Sugar shows that the threat of dust explosions is very real at industrial worksites across America and needs to be addressed immediately,” said Miller. “It’s unfortunate that it takes the Congress of the United States to tell OSHA how to do its job. The agency has known about these dangers for a long time and

should have acted years ago to prevent explosions like this one. Workers cannot be asked to wait any longer for these basic protections.”





Workers Memorial Day

More than three decades ago, Congress passed the Occupational Safety and Health Act promising every worker the right to a safe job. The labor movement has fought hard to make that promise a reality—winning protections that have saved hundreds of thousands of lives and prevented millions of workplace injuries. Nonetheless, the toll of workplace injuries, illnesses and deaths remains enormous. In 2006, more than 4.1 million workers were injured and 5,703 workers were killed due to job hazards. Another 50,000 died due to occupational diseases.

The fight for safe jobs has gotten harder under the Bush Administration. At the behest of corporate interests, the Administration has moved to roll back and weaken worker protections. Voluntary compliance has been favored over issuing new protective standards and enforcement. Progress has ground to a halt and may be reversing. Many workers have little or no protection and major hazards remain unaddressed. Catastrophes in coal mines and factories continue, with little action to prevent them.

In 2008, here are some of the major challenges the labor movement faces in the fight for safe jobs:

1 Millions of Workers Have No OSHA Protection

More than three decades after the passage of the OSHA Act, more than 8.6 million state and local public employees and other workers, including flight attendants, have no protection under the OSHA law.

2 Penalties for Violations are Weak

The average penalty for a serious violation of the OSHA law continues to be woefully low—only \$906. Criminal penalties under OSHA are weaker than all other safety and health laws, limited only to those cases where a willful violation results in the death of a worker, and even then it is only a misdemeanor. Legislation has been introduced in the House and Senate (The Protecting America's Workers Act, H.R. 2049, S. 1244) that would strengthen OSHA penalties and other worker rights and protections.

3 No New Workplace Safety and Health Rules

The Bush Administration killed dozens of worker protection measures under development at OSHA and MSHA, including rules on cancer causing substances, reactive chemicals, and infectious diseases such as TB. This Administration has the worst record on safety rules in OSHA's entire history, issuing no new significant rules during its first term. The only health standard issued—a standard on hexavalent chromium in 2006—was in response to a court order. For seven years, the Administration refused to issue a rule requiring employers to pay for personal protective equipment, particularly important for immigrant and low wage workers. Finally in 2007, this rule was issued, but only after the AFL-CIO and UFCW went to court and Congress ordered OSHA to act. The Administration has failed to protect workers from disabling and deadly lung disease caused by the butter flavoring diacetyl, used in microwave popcorn and other foods. The House of Representatives passed legislation (H.R. 2693) directing OSHA to issue an emergency rule, but Senate Republicans have stalled the bill.

4 Ergonomic Hazards Still a Major Problem

Soon after taking office in 2001, the Bush Administration joined with anti-worker business groups to repeal OSHA's ergonomics standard. The standard, ten years in the making, would have required employers to protect workers from the nation's biggest job safety problem—injuries caused by heavy lifting and repetitive work. The Administration's promised "comprehensive plan" to address ergonomic hazards has turned out to be a sham. In six years, only three voluntary non-enforceable guidelines—for nursing homes, retail grocery and poultry—have been issued. No general duty violations for ergonomic hazards have been issued by federal OSHA since November 2005. Meanwhile, musculoskeletal disorders remain a major job safety problem, responsible for nearly one-third of all workplace injuries.

5 Employer Voluntary Programs Favored Over Enforcement

The Administration has made expanding voluntary programs and outreach to employers a top priority. Bush's OSHA has set up partnerships and alliances with dozens of employers, largely excluding unions. At both OSHA and MSHA, industry officials have been appointed to top positions, increasing the employer friendly orientation and policies of these agencies.

6 Workplace Injuries are Underreported and Workers Discouraged from Reporting Injuries

Even though the toll of reported injuries is high, recent studies have found that these reports miss two out of three workplace injuries. Increasingly, workers are being discouraged from reporting job injuries, often facing discipline or termination when they are injured.

These practices are particularly rampant in industries where immigrant workers are employed, such as poultry. Despite this growing problem, OSHA has taken no action to stop these practices that put workers in danger, and totally distort the real toll of workplace injuries.

7 Maintaining OSHA, MSHA and NIOSH Funding

Since President Bush took office, maintaining adequate funding for the federal job safety programs has been a struggle, with repeated attempts to slash funding. Since FY 2001, the OSHA budget has been cut by \$30.2 million (6%) in real dollar terms and hundreds of positions have been eliminated. At MSHA, repeated attempts were made to cut funding for coal mine enforcement. Only after the Sago and other mine tragedies has the Administration requested additional funds for the mine safety program. But the FY 2009 budget request would cut the OSHA and MSHA programs, in real dollar terms, compared to FY 2008 funding levels, including cuts in the MSHA coal enforcement program. Once again, the Bush Administration proposes to eliminate OSHA's worker training program. For NIOSH, the job safety research agency, a \$34.1 million cut (in real dollar terms) is proposed, reducing the nation's commitment to researching and preventing workplace injuries, diseases and deaths.



Manufacturing Can Be Revitalized, Says Brown

On February 13, 2008, U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH) spoke at a Shared Prosperity forum held by the Economic Policy Institute on renewing American manufacturing.

Speaking before an audience of economists, union representatives, academics, manufacturing advocates, and interested citizens, Senator Brown, a strong advocate of a robust manufacturing sector, spoke about the importance of revitalizing America's strong manufacturing tradition.

"Manufacturing is largely responsible for the quality of life that Americans enjoy. Our prosperity—and our national security—relies on a strong manufacturing base. Yet, the manufacturing share of the American economy has been slipping. In 2005, manufacturing accounted for 12 percent of GDP. That is down from 15 percent less than a decade earlier," said Brown.

Brown noted that the last eight years have been especially trying for manufacturing workers. "We are all well aware of the damage

"More than 40,000 manufacturing plants have been shut down in the U.S. since 2000. With that, more than 3.3 million manufacturing jobs have been lost—about one-sixth of all U.S. manufacturing jobs."



U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH)

the Bush Administration has done to manufacturing since 2000. This Administration has been marked by indifference towards manufacturing. More than 40,000 manufacturing plants have been shut down in the U.S. since 2000. With that, more than 3.3 million manufacturing jobs have been

lost—about one-sixth of all U.S. manufacturing jobs," he added.

Yet Brown was optimistic about the future of American manufacturing, and asked the audience to imagine what American manufacturing will look like in 20 years. According to the Senator, part of the focus must be on "green jobs." "Through strategic investments in alternative energy we can not only create jobs, but we can grow an entire industry. In particular, many of the states that have suffered the greatest loss of manufacturing jobs now have the greatest potential to supply our growing alternative energy industry."

The role of globalization was also examined. "Addressing American manufacturing's renewal requires a global outlook," said Brown. "The low road is using globalization to drive down wages and standards. We need to block the low road which means addressing our trade relationship with China and re-designing the contents of trade agreements. For too long, business has protected its interests in trade. Why shouldn't labor and manufacturing?"

Brown ended his speech on a positive note. "Manufacturing has been—and continues to be—the engine of U.S. economic growth. There is a valuable work ethic in manufacturing. There is dignity in manufacturing. Ohioans—like so many Americans—understand the words of Pope John Paul II: "We judge any economic system by what it does for and to ordinary people and by how it permits all to participate in it. The economy should serve the people, not the other way around," Brown concluded.



AFL-CIO EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ADVOCATES 'Green' Economy

On March 5, the AFL-CIO Executive Council, made up of international union executive officers, including BCTGM's International President Frank Hurt, unanimously passed a resolution calling for the greening of the economy and the creation of a climate change and jobs strategy that benefits all Americans.

According to AFL-CIO President John Sweeney, the move by organized labor to encourage a more sustainable economy would help revive the American middle-class. "The AFL-CIO supports a new industrial policy, an environmental economic development policy, which places manufacturing and trade at the center of a green economy program. New investment in a sustainable energy infrastructure must be structured to create good jobs and ensure stable energy prices," Sweeney said.

The resolution by the Council is



a further indication that organized labor has made climate change and sustainability a priority.

"Our members and workers everywhere," the federation said, "with their knowledge, skills and experience—have valuable insights to offer for the greening of the workplace and the community. The greening of the economy means that every job that contributes to a low carbon future is a green job."

According to BCTGM International President Hurt, it should not seem so strange that

organized labor would embrace a green strategy as a way to rejuvenate the economy. "This strategy allows us to promote a vision that will benefit our members and their families, that will create high-paying middle-class jobs, and that will help clean up the environment to the benefit of future generations," said Hurt.

In addition, the AFL-CIO is working with its international counterpart, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), as a part of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) negotiations. At the December 2007 UNFCCC meetings in Bali, Indonesia, AFL-CIO members served as part of an ITUC delegation.

"The nation stands at the crossroads of opportunity for domestic investments in innovation, new technology and energy efficiency that will save jobs, create new jobs and new industries and revitalize American manufacturing," the AFL-CIO resolution declares.

Greening the Economy: A Climate Change and Jobs Strategy That Works for All

The resolution indicates that the federation's program for a green economy requires five pre-conditions. Those are:

1. The U.S. should embrace a balanced approach that ensures diverse, abundant, affordable energy supplies, creates good jobs for America's workers and improves the environment.
2. The U.S. should adopt an economy-wide cap-and-trade program that is transparent and requires all sectors to come to the table to reduce their carbon emissions. It should have timetables and standards that allow for the development and deployment of new technology and should help finance the new technologies that can provide clean energy at prices close to conventional sources.
3. Energy incentives and investments by the federal government must be based on a set of economic development principles that clean the environment and create jobs but will not encourage offshoring of manufacturing jobs.
4. Investments must be used to identify, develop and capture cutting-edge technologies and to manufacture and build those technologies here for domestic use and export.
5. The international component of any climate change cap-and-trade-program must provide incentives to ensure that developing nations, such as China and India, can participate.

NOTEABLE Quotes

"I'm still not saying there is a recession."

—Eddie Lazear, Chairman of President Bush's Council of Economic Advisors

"By virtually every indicator, 2007 was a dismal year for American workers. Job growth slowed, unemployment jumped and wages lost what little ground they had gained against inflation since 2003. There is one sliver of good news: the percentage of American workers who belong to a union rose for the first time in three decades."

—New York Times, editorial, February 7, 2008

"We have very deep trace capabilities. All incoming ingredients are tracked. We know into what recipe they're used and at what time those ingredients are used. It's all computerized."

—Roz O'Hearn, spokeswoman for Nestle Prepared Foods Co., a unit of Switzerland's Nestle SA, in the wake of the hallmark recall of over 143 million pounds of beef.

"We owe it to the victims and their families to do everything we can to prevent this kind of disaster from ever happening again."

—U.S. Rep. John Barrow (D-GA), whose district includes the Imperial Sugar plant that was devastated by an explosion on February 7, 2008, that killed twelve workers.

"There seem to be two different economic realities operating in our country today. And the rules of compensation in one world are completely different from those in the other. Most Americans live in a world where economic security is precarious and there are real economic consequences for failure. But our nation's top executives seem to live by a different set of rules."

—Opening statement by Henry Waxman (D-CA) Chairman of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, before a hearing on sky-rocketing CEO Compensation.

"How many records does the price of oil have to set and surpass before President Bush stands up for hardworking American families and stops taxpayer giveaways to Big Oil?"

—House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA)

First Canadian Company Fined for Criminal Negligence in Death of Worker



A judge in Quebec has ordered Transpave Inc., a Quebec-based company, to pay \$110,000 in fines for a criminal negligence case involving the death of a worker in 2005.

Steve L'Ecuyer, 23, was killed in October 2005 when he was crushed by a machine that was used with an unplugged emergency safety device.

It is the first case where an employer has been found negligent in the case of a worker's death since the Criminal Code was amended in 2004. Organized labour, including the BCTGM, fought for more than a decade to have the Criminal Code amended after the 1992 Westray mine disaster in Nova Scotia where 26 men were killed as a direct result of employer negligence.

According to Ken Georgetti, President of the Canadian Labour

Congress, the ruling is not, in itself, a victory since it came after a plea bargain between the company and the provincial government. "This week's weak court ruling sends the wrong message to employers and corporations that nothing's changed and they can still afford to put their workers' lives at risk without any personal consequences," said Georgetti.

The Quebec Federation of Labour denounced the decision.

Federation president Michel Arsenault said Transpave workers had made a number of health and safety complaints against the company leading up to the

accident. "For a good number of years, Transpave was a bad employer that didn't respect the safety and security of its employees," Arsenault said. "It's a

bit disappointing to see them walk away with a \$110,000 fine."

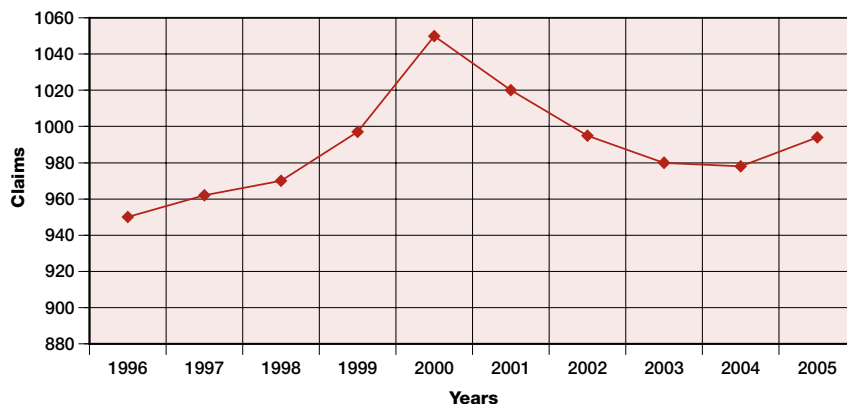
In March 2004, the Criminal Code was amended to expand the scope of liability for criminal negligence in the workplace. The amendments made it easier for companies to be convicted of negligence causing injury or death in the

workplace and created a process to determine if an employer violated the code. The amendment was praised by health and safety advocates, unions and many government officials, but it has been used sparingly over the past four years.

However, many union officials believe that there will be more criminal convictions against negligent companies in the future. "Using the Criminal Code to prosecute rogue employers is a new phenomenon in Canada," said BCTGM International President Frank Hurt. "As long as employers continue to have a reckless disregard for their employees' safety, there will be many more of these prosecutions."



Total Occupational Injury Claims, Canada,* 1996-2005



*All jurisdictions
Source: National Work Injury Statics Program (NWISP), Association of Workers' Compensation Boards of Canada

Local 114 Holds Job Fair for Non-Union Workers

BCTGM Local 114 (Portland, Ore.) knew that they had to turn a disappointing organizing defeat into a bittersweet victory. To that end, the Local, along with help from BCTGM International representative Eric Anderson, held a job fair March 1 for nonunion employees at Kerry Sweet Ingredients in Tualatin, Ore. who had recently been told by the company the plant was closing and they would all lose their jobs.

Kerry, one of the world's largest manufacturers of food ingredients with headquarters in Ireland, announced in December that it would close its Tualatin plant in June 2008 and lay off 80 employees. The plant makes cookies and ice cream.

What makes this situation unique is that Local 114 had lost an organizing election at the Tualatin plant in 2007. The workers there had attempted to organize with Local 114 last spring, but faced a brutal anti-

union campaign. Management held mandatory meetings, fired a key union supporter, and threatened to close down if the workers voted to join the BCTGM.

Local 114 filed several unfair labor practice charges, along with 19 objections to employer conduct prior to and during the union election—which it lost in August by just nine votes.

According to Local 114 Business Agent Terry Lansing, support for the union was still high in the plant despite the anti-union hostility of the company. "The workers at the Kerry plant still support us, and in this hour of need for them, we're supporting them," said Lansing.

The union set up a job fair



at the Plumbers and Fitters Hall in Tualatin, where they invited representatives from unionized BCTGM shops including United States Bakery's Franz Bread and Smith Cookies, Kroger Clackamas Bakery, the Safeway Bread Plant, and the Bimbo/Oroweat Bakery, to come interview prospective employees and take applications.

"The Kerry employees were extremely grateful, and were excited about the opportunity to work in a BCTGM shop," said Anderson.



During the 76th session of the BCTGM General Executive Board (GEB) in San Diego March 13-17, BCTGM Vice President Steve Bertelli was sworn in as the newest member of the GEB. Bertelli replaced Jeanne Graham as Region 3 Vice President after Graham retired in 2007.

Pictured here, BCTGM International President Frank Hurt (right) administers the Oath of Office to Bertelli (left) during the annual spring meeting.

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-BCTGM International
President Frank Hurt

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