

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 7, 2021

The Honorable Robin Carnahan
Administrator
United States General Services Administration
1800 F Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20405

Dear Administrator Carnahan:

We write with concern over reports that GSA officials have failed to provide proper oversight over the Goodfellow Federal Center, in St. Louis Missouri, which exposed workers to toxic and explosive materials.

According to a report from the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, workers and a childcare facility at the Goodfellow Federal Facility in St. Louis were exposed to “widespread, longstanding” contaminants including asbestos, lead, mercury, arsenic and explosive materials.”¹

The report says GSA officials “deliberately misled tenants about the well-documented health risks at the Goodfellow Federal Center in north St. Louis.”² We recognize that the report was referring to events that occurred before your tenure as GSA Administrator.

In a letter from the U.S. Office of Special Council (OSC) to President Biden, that office reported that officials knew about these contaminations since at least 2002. The OSC letter also states that officials did not take substantial action to notify workers or tenant agencies of the dangers and that officials issued overtly misleading communications to employees that exhibited a “pattern of suppressing or downplaying risks.”³

The letter also referenced a response from the Federal Occupational Health (FOH) agency during a recent investigation, which reported that there was a “significant pattern of ongoing, self-perpetuating management defects including a lack of oversight by and requirements/orders from the GSA central office, the site/region’s deficient environmental management systems, their management culture and history of noncompliance, group think, a disbelief/discounting of the opinions and recommendations of subject matter experts, absent or overtly misleading hazard communication and a poor performance incentive system...”⁴

¹ Bryce Gray, *New Investigation Says Management misled tenants about toxic exposure at Goodfellow Federal Center*, (Nov. 7, 2021), https://www.stltoday.com/news/local/metro/new-investigation-says-management-misled-tenants-about-toxic-exposure-at-goodfellow-federal-center/article_0da8b713-b944-5db8-8904-025a0bf4d96c.html.

² *Id.*

³ Henry Kerner, *See letter from the Office of Special Counsel to President Biden on Goodfellow facility* (Nov. 5, 2021) https://cdn.govexec.com/media/gbc/docs/pdfs_edit/110521ew1b.pdf.

⁴ *Id.*

If this continues to be the case it is unacceptable. Federal officials should be providing proper oversight and protection for workers, not ignoring worker safety. At a bare minimum, Missouri workers deserve a safe work environment and honest stewardship from supervisors and their government officials.

Please provide the following information by December 15, 2021:

1. What is your office doing to assist workers at the Goodfellow Federal Center who have been exposed to dangerous or toxic materials?
2. What is your plan to ensure workers at the Goodfellow Federal Center do not suffer financial harm, loss of employment, unreasonable relocation standards, or any other financial burden resulting from facility changes or facility closure efforts?
3. What are you doing to discipline officials in your office who misled, attempted to downplay, or hid the dangerous working conditions for employees at the Goodfellow Federal Center? Please include a list of all disciplinary actions take thus far.
4. What plan does your office have to ensure better oversight strategies and management policies for facilities which have been reported to have dangerous working conditions?
5. How is your office planning to ensure that claims of unsafe workplaces are properly investigated in light of the recent findings at the Goodfellow Federal Center?

Sincerely,



Josh Hawley
U.S. Senator



Roy Blunt
U.S. Senator