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Oregon OSHA - A Partnership Between Labor and Management: Memo Submitted to the Commission on the Future of Worker-Management Relations

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Comments

Includes newspaper article regarding Oregon OSHA and sample factsheet for Norpac Foods, an Oregon company.

Suggested Citation

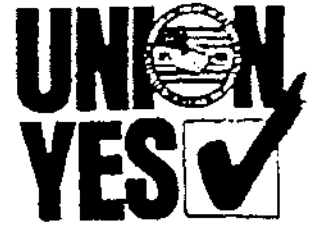
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"Future Worker Management"



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July 28, 1993

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INDUSTRIAL AND LABOR RELATIONS
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To: Commission on the Future of Worker -
Management Relations

From: Irvin H. Fletcher, President

Re: OREGON OSHA - A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN
LABOR AND MANAGEMENT

In May of 1990, Governor Neil Goldschmidt called a special session of the Oregon Legislative Assembly to enact into law Senate Bill 1197, possibly the most far reaching reform of a state's worker compensation statutes in the past forty years. A major piece of Senate Bill 1197, possibly the most important piece, is Section 1 which mandates the establishment of SAFETY COMMITTEES.

Several months prior to the special session of the Legislative Assembly, Governor Goldschmidt appointed a workers compensation reform task force, soon to be dubbed, THE MAHONIA HALL COMMITTEE, of equal numbers of labor and management representatives. This committee met for five months and delivered its report to the Governor in April of 1990.

What's in Section 1 of Senate Bill 1197 that is so new, so revolutionary that we are here today discussing Oregon's OSHA program? To put it simply, it's nothing new nor revolutionary...safety committees at work sites have been around in this country for decades at unionized plants; they are also known to exist at the more enlightened work sites of non-union employers. The unique aspect of Oregon's OSHA division and its administration of the joint labor/management MANDATED safety committees is that both concerned parties: LABOR AND MANAGEMENT have made a commitment to make them work!

Back to the MAHONIA HALL COMMITTEE: Early on in the discussions about workers compensation reform, the labor representatives were adamant that any major overhaul of Oregon's system MUST include a piece MANDATING the establishment, at all work sites of joint labor/management safety committees. The eventual compromise was that all employers, with ten or more employees, must have a committee, and employers with less than ten employees must have committees if there was a high incidence of injury at those smaller employers work sites.

Make safety standard

Congress should adopt Oregon's safety-committee model as part of federal OSHA reform legislation

The Senate will welcome Oregon's Occupational Safety and Health Administration when it holds hearings Wednesday on legislation to reform the federal act.

Why the honor? The state was a leader in strengthening its OSHA plan three years ago.

Oregon's reforms came just a few months before a fire killed 25 employees in a North Carolina chicken-processing plant. Momentum for federal OSHA reform began to build after an investigation found 83 safety violations including locked doors and unmarked exits.

Required health and safety committees, elements of Oregon's plan and federal reform, would sharply reduce the chances of similar tragedies.

The federal act's overhaul requires immediate action on conditions that pose imminent danger of death or serious injury. It calls for speeding the standards adoption and requires companies to have written health and safety policies as well as management-labor safety committees at companies

with 11 or more workers.

Jack Pompei, administrator for the state OSHA, says the federal legislation borrows heavily from Oregon's plan, so it is expected to have no material effect here.

The final legislation should include health and safety committees, but not because links have been proved between the committees and claims reduction. State OSHA reform overlapped reforms in Oregon's workers' compensation system. Thus it is not possible yet to pinpoint how much of the claims reduction is due to workplaces made safer by employer-employee committees.

But safety committees clearly are low-cost mechanisms with potential to avert costly and sometimes tragic accidents. Saif Corp., the state-owned insurer for workers' compensation, and numerous industry groups believe that safety committees have helped create safer work environments.

Big chunks of the OSHA-reform legislation may face uphill battles against business lobbies. Mandated safety committees should not.

Oregonian

7/13/93

Unsigned editorials in this column present the views of The Oregonian. Signed columns, letters and editorial cartoons elsewhere on this page and in the Forum section express the views of their authors and cartoonists.

*HOT TOPICS
"Future Worker Management"*



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NORPAC FOODS INC

NORPAC FOODS FACTS

- **BEGAN IN 1924 AS STAYTON CANNING COMPANY**
- **1932 JOINED NINE OTHER WESTERN FOOD COOPERATIVES FORMING NORTH PACIFIC CANNERS AND PACKERS, INC. (NORPAC)**
- **COOPERATIVE OWNED BY 251 GROWER MEMBERS**
- **HARVEST 41,500 ACRES ANNUALLY**
- **85% OF PRODUCTION IS FROZEN**
- **15% CANNED AND OTHER**
- **SOLD NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY**
- **ANNUAL SALES 1992: \$237 MILLION**
- **EMPLOYS: 990 FULL-TIME; 3,510 SEASONAL**
- **PROCESSES 320 MILLION POUNDS OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES YEARLY**
- **SIX PLANT LOCATIONS:**
 - **CANNING AND FREEZING - STAYTON, BROOKS, AND SALEM**
 - **FREEZING - DAYTON AND SALEM**
 - **FROZEN REPACKAGING - SALEM**
 - **CANNED LABELING AND DISTRIBUTION - SALEM**
- **SUBSIDIARIES OWNED BY NORPAC FOODS, INC:**
 - **HERMISTON FOODS, HERMISTON, OREGON PROCESSING AND FREEZING**
 - **STONE MILL FOODS, PORTLAND, OREGON PROCESSING AND DISTRIBUTION OF DELI FOODS**
- **NORPAC CONTRIBUTES TO OREGON'S YEARLY ECONOMY WITH A \$38 MILLION PAYROLL TO EMPLOYEES**

NORPAC Foods has labor agreements with Teamsters and Operating Engineers