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Mr. Chairman and esteemed members of the committee: My family and I appreciate being given the opportunity to speak to you on a subject that is very important to us.

My father, Leon Meade began working for the Department of Energy in 1949. During this time he worked in all the plants in Oak Ridge. The job that we feel that has impacted us most as a family is the one from the years 1969 till his retirement in 1985. During this time he worked in assembly. He was in fact assembling the devices that were made at the Y-12 facility, which included the handling and cutting of Beryllium and Asbestos.

In 1985, the company offered a retirement package, which my father accepted. My parents and grandparents owned a 150-acre farm and my father enjoyed working on it. He retired and had four fairly good years and then his health began to decline.

The sickness started with a lot of pain with no apparent cause. You must understand that for him even to complain was unusual. He was never sick and never took medicine. We knew something was wrong. We were told that we should take him to Mayo's Clinic in Jacksonville Florida. We did this twice to no avail. The doctors did not know what was wrong. They found what they thought was evidence of early myeloma (cancer). They could not find it in his body. They knew something was wrong but could not figure out what. We also made several trips to Vanderbilt Hospital in Nashville with the same outcome- yes, something is very wrong but we don't know what. There were repeated trips to doctors and hospitals in Knoxville, Tennessee. He was admitted several times to the University of Tennessee Hospital as well as Baptist Hospital. Each time we made these trips we always braced ourselves for the worst. We knew that something was terribly wrong but still we could not get a diagnosis.

The years went on and my father grew much worse. He started having constant pain in his lower abdomen and in his prostate. The pain was constant. He stayed on antibiotics for over a year and nothing changed. The pain has grown and spread. We finally found the cause of his trouble. After one of our many hospital stays that was for what appeared to be pneumonia, a specialist came to talk to us about where my father had worked and what he had done. The lung specialist that attended to him was Dr. Cherry. He told us he wanted to test my father for Beryllium. Although my father understood what he was saying the rest of us were in the dark. We did a little research and found that Beryllium reacts as a cancer. Without someone knowing what he or she are actually looking for this disease can be present without being diagnosed. This

explained why the apparent cancer was showing up. The test results showed Beryllium in his lungs, asbestos coating the outside of his lungs, as well as heavy metal in his body. These heavy metals account for the constant pain in his lower abdomen.

My family's feelings were great, finally we know what is wrong-let's fix it. We have found there is no fix. We have watched a man who has always been in control turn into an invalid. We have had to sell our cattle because he can't take care of them. We have watched his weight fall from over 180 pounds when he retired to something less than 120 pounds. He is over six feet tall, so you can imagine that he is only skin and bones.

We try and think of things that he will or can eat. Nothing will stay down. He can no longer go out in public. He is embarrassed because he doesn't know when the vomiting will strike. He can't get his breath he must have oxygen. He can't bathe himself he must have help. He can't walk without the aid of a walker. He doesn't sleep at night because of the pain and because he is afraid he will die. He takes over 16 pills a day. Some days it is hard to get them to stay down and other days he misses the medication because of the sickness. He doesn't see the benefit and we have to talk about the need to continue to try to take the medicine. I haven't touched on how this affects the family as a whole. My mother stays with him 24 hours a day. He doesn't like for her to leave because he is afraid something will happen. My brothers and I take turns getting the medication and groceries. One of us must always be on stand-by in case of emergency. He knows that he is dying and that there is nothing that can be done. There is no cure for Berylliosis, Asbestosis or heavy metal. We know that his time is short but it is his quality of life that we are concerned about.

In January, he was sick and in the hospital. When he came home they needed to give him medicine that cost \$500 a day. That just was not possible. We need help! His medical expenses are rising daily. His insurance questions his stays in the hospital because they think that the Department of Energy should be paying for his stays. Every time we go to a doctor or hospital we have to go through a mountain of paperwork about who is responsible. In the first two months of 2000, he has already had several hundreds of dollars in out of pocket prescriptions. We can assume that by the end of the year, if we are fortunate enough to have him that long and if things stay the same and he gets no worse, the cost will be into the thousands in out of pocket costs. If things worsen, the cost could easily go into the tens of thousands in out of pocket costs.

A decision by his insurance company has now been made that limits pain medications to cancer patients. Neither my father nor any of the former employees with any of these diseases will be able to withstand the pain without medication.

The bottom line is really very simple; my father did a job for over 31 years. He did it because that is what the Department of Energy asked of him. He was not told that he was in danger and that he was risking his life each and every day. I believe that there is evidence that goes back as far as 1952 that proves the Department had knowledge of Beryllium and how it could affect your health.

In December when I attended my first meeting with Dr. Michaels and his staff, I was surprised at the number of people who came forward to speak. I feel sorry for the people who have just been diagnosed. If they are in their late thirties or even in their forties, they will have a long and expensive road to travel.

We have found the Department of Energy to not be very helpful. They have asked my father to go to Nevada for examination as well as New Jersey. We have explained that he can hardly walk through the house. How can he be expected to make a trip like that? As recently as one month ago we did get him to Oak Ridge because the Department wanted to run more tests. We filled out more paper work (which I have attached). Every time they want to have a test run, you receive more paper work just like the other that has been filled out. Is this really necessary? Everything is in the personnel file or they would not be trying to run the test to begin with.

My father has been retired for 14 years, ten of those years he has been sick. During this time there has not been an increase in his retirement benefits, insurance coverage nor has anything been offered to help make this devastating illness easier for my mother or the rest of my family. How can we be expected to give him the quality of life that he deserves?

I would like to leave you with one last thought:

You are in the room with your father a man who never cries. You watch as tears run down his face and he says, "all I want is to stop hurting and to have my health back is that to much to ask?" There is no answer to this. There is no way to stop or prolong what he is going through.