



For Immediate Release

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***ENZI CALLS FOR ACCOUNTABILITY
IN IMPERIAL SUGAR REFINERY EXPLOSION***

Washington D.C. – U.S. Senator Mike Enzi, R-Wyo., Ranking Member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee (HELP Committee), today made the following statement as the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) announced it has issued citations against Imperial Sugar Co. for violations that led to a deadly explosion last February in Pentworth, Georgia:

“OSHA has issued severe charges of disregard for worker safety at the Imperial Sugar refinery. I plan to review the findings of this investigation very closely. Those responsible for this tragedy must be held accountable,” Enzi said.

“Our hearts remain with the families and friends of the workers who lost their lives in this explosion, and with the surviving workers who are still dealing with their injuries. Safety must be our top priority to prevent an accident like this from occurring again.”

OSHA announced today that it would issue over 200 citations and levy \$8,777,500 in fines against Imperial Sugar Co. for violations at its refineries in Georgia and Louisiana.

Thirteen workers died and forty more were injured in an explosion at the Imperial Sugar refinery in Pentworth, Georgia on February 7, 2008. Three individuals remain hospitalized. Approximately five weeks after the explosion, and a week after OSHA notified Imperial Sugar Co. of the need to comply with safety standards in its other facilities, OSHA conducted an inspection of Imperial’s Gramercy, Louisiana facility. Despite the Georgia accident and OSHA’s warning, inspectors found that the levels of dust at the Louisiana facility ranged from an inch to four feet deep. The situation there was so dangerous that OSHA issued an “imminent danger” notice and then effectively shut down the refinery.

Enzi sent a letter to the Secretary of Labor on February 13 requesting that the Department complete a thorough investigation of the accident. Senator Ted Kennedy (D-MA), Chairman of the HELP Committee, Senator Patty Murray (D-WA), Senator Saxby Chambliss (R-GA), and Senator Johnny Isakson (R-GA) also signed the letter.

The HELP Subcommittee on Employment and Workplace Safety is holding a hearing on the accident on Tuesday, July 29.

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