

LETTER TO THE EDITOR**WSIB changes underway, and more to come**

The Toronto Star, March 07, 2009

Re: Audit slams Ontario workplace safety rebates, March 4

Your Workplace Safety and Insurance Board coverage distorts the system put in place in 1914 to serve injured workers with irresponsible and highly misleading reporting. Calling the WSIB-commissioned "consultants report" an "audit" suggests this review, which began long before the *Star* showed any interest, leads to a distortion of the outcome of this work. In addition, this is the culmination of our board of directors work to "study" the issue and make sound rational changes, which I have been saying are needed for some time.

The WSIB has already made changes: no rebates where a fatality occurs; a new team to look at firms that have been fined for breaking the law; a special advisory committee of the board of directors to study the issue; and the hiring of a consultant to do research for the committee. It is interesting to note the same people who decried the selection of the consultants Morneau Sobeco as "bean counters" now claim vindication. This report is a tool that we will use to make our system better.

I will not sit idly by while a crusade continues to muddy the very turbulent waters around us and destroy a system that is always under scrutiny and review, and always looking for ways to improve. The focus should be on how we can eliminate the over 300,000 claims we receive each year; how we can eliminate the 100 fatalities, on average, that occur each year; and how we can help the families of the 260 workers who die from occupational disease each year. There are still tragedies that occur in our workplaces.

This is a very complex issue and needs calm and thoughtful deliberation. It also requires extensive consultation and under my leadership it will get both.



*Steven W. Mahoney, Chair,
Workplace Safety and Insurance Board*