

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 9, 2010

Kenneth Melson
Deputy Director
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives
99 New York Avenue, N.E.
Room 5S 144
Washington, D.C. 20226

Deputy Director Melson:

I am troubled by reports that agents from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) have been denying the Chemical Safety Board (CSB) access to the scene of the power plant explosion in Middletown, Connecticut. I ask that the ATF immediately begin working with the CSB to provide its investigators with access to evidence and witnesses at the accident site.

The CSB is an independent federal agency charged with investigating industrial accidents. The CSB often works across jurisdictions of federal agencies to find the root causes of these accidents and to issue recommendations to assure similar accidents do not occur in the future. Crucial to that mission is timely access to witnesses and undisturbed evidence.

I understand and appreciate that ATF is working hard to uncover any criminal wrongdoing and protect our communities from hazardous explosives. However, it is critical that the CSB not be impeded from conducting its investigation into the causes of this accident and making safety recommendations to plants, workers, and regulatory agencies. I ask that you work to immediately allow CSB investigators access to this site, and I look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

