



NRC NEWS

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NRC SETTLES DISCRIMINATION CASE; VENDOR AGREES TO STRENGTHEN ITS ANTI-RETALIAION POLICIES

ABSG Consulting Inc., of Houston, has agreed to implement several measures aimed at strengthening its anti-retaliation policies as part of a settlement with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission of a discrimination complaint involving a former ABSG employee.

The settlement, reached under the NRC's alternative dispute resolution program, stems from a finding by the NRC that a former ABSG employee was fired, in part, for participating in a hearing before the agency's Atomic Safety and Licensing Board. Although the employee participated in that hearing before being hired by ABSG, the NRC determined that the termination appeared to violate the agency's employee protection regulations. ABSG is an independently owned and operated risk, safety and integrity management company serving various industries in the United States and overseas, some of which are regulated by the NRC.

"A strong safety-conscious work environment among licensees, contractors and vendors is a high priority for the NRC," said Roy Zimmerman, director of the Office of Enforcement. "We do not tolerate discrimination against employees who raise safety concerns."

The settlement has been confirmed in an Order issued to the company, which is available in NRC's [ADAMS document database](#) using accession number ML12101A135. Under the settlement, the company agreed to implement several measures beyond corrective actions the company already put in place:

- Reinforcing, through a written communication from ABSG's president, the company's policy regarding employees' right to raise concerns;
- Developing anti-retaliation training for all company employees involved in the nuclear sector;
- Publishing an article in the company's online newsletter concerning the protections afforded by NRC regulations; and
- Establishing a process to review proposed adverse actions against nuclear-sector employees who have engaged in protected activities.

ABSG has not admitted to any apparent retaliation or violation. However, as a result of the company's own review of the incident, the company issued a letter to the manager involved stressing the company's commitment to its non-retaliation policies, and directed an expanded policy for inclusion in the company's benefits guide and its code of ethics.

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